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Naming in Wordsworth: A Study of Poems from 1807 and 'The Prelude'

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The gesture of naming is Wordsworth's poetry, anticipated in early shorter poems of 1807, reaches a climax in "The Prelude," Wordsworth's epic poem about the growth of his own mind. Wordsworth's use of names and his comments about language in the fourteen books of the latter poem, while conforming to the precedent of epic style, objectify his own wrestling with the philosophic issue of language in both its vulnerability and potential as the poet's medium.

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` Chapter I: Introduction

One interesting change in Wordsworth criticism as an effect of the growing impact of linguistics on both philosophy and aesthetics in our century has been that whereas discussions of "language" used to denote a treatment of either imagery or the poetic diction controversy, "language" is now regarded as a level of concern encompassing both theme and technique. Along with this more open approach to language appears a tendency to rate language as being either a success or failure, as adequate or inadequate to the point of view of a particular poem or poems. Hence an essay by Jim Springer Borck, "Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and the Failure of Language," cites the elements of apologetic rhetoric in parts of *The Prelude*, its loose, conversational syntax, and the author's familiarity with primitivistic language theories to show that language in the poem is identified with "progressive imprecision" and with "transformation and loss."[1] David Perkins' chapter on "The Adequacy of Language" in *The Poetry of Sincerity* acknowledges that, in spite of a dominant pessimism governing the central images of language in *The Prelude*, the poet demonstrates from time to time the artist's hopeful confidence in his medium.[2]

Most critics, whether chiefly stylistic or philosophic in focus, recognize the dialectical element of Wordsworth's stance on the issue in both his poetry and prose. According to Holkeboer and Bishop, Wordsworth "for a time" regarded "words" as "dynamic entities with a life of their own," a view which, however, he did not embrace without qualification; at the same time, "he consistently refused to admit that language is a fortuitous system of arbitrary signs such as 'X.'"[3]

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[1] Jim Springer Borck, "Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and the Failure of Language," *Studies in English Literature,* 1500-1900, 13 (1973), 605-16.

[2] David Perkins, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964, 84-107.

With a similar emphasis, John Jones earlier addressed the problem of "language" in the Epilogue to his study of 1954, finding that Wordsworth is sensitive in his poetry to both the limitations and potential of language, with a "confidence in the relational power of language" underlying his attempt to make the "dichotomy of thing and thought . . . metaphysically tolerable."[4]

Reflecting renewed psychological interest in *The Prelude* and the influence of Geoffrey Hartman's criticism, several studies have appeared which would show that in passages describing reflective moments in landscape, Wordsworth is avoiding self-knowledge, or else using language in a manner to distract from certain painful recognitions. Thomas Weiskel's "Wordsworth and the Defile of the Word," cites the murderer's carved name in *The Prelude*, Book XII, and the peasant's droll reply to the travelers in Simplon Pass (Book VI) as examples of language used to "occlude" painful recognitions or actual painful memories.[5] And in a more recent book-length study of language in Wordsworth, Frances Ferguson examines *The Prelude, The Excursion*, and some of the shorter poems for what she calls the "epitaphic mode": a "habit of mind" whereby the poet signifies his inability further to articulate a meaning or experience by employing repetition, apostrophe, exclamation, and the like, to break off or redirect his narrative and thus to celebrate and "absence" in the manner of epitaph.[6] In *The Confessional Imagination*, Frank D. McConnell also points to the tyrannical or "daemonical" quality language was capable of assuming for the poet-speaker of *The Prelude* in his pilgrim-like search for higher levels of experience and expression.[7]

Beyond the central value of Wordsworth's metaphorical use of language within the poems as established by such studies as those mentioned above, some of the stylistic discussions have contributed particular insight in the area of his concept of rhetoric and figurative language in poetry. Roger Murray follows Hartman in suggesting that Wordsworth's practice with regard to metaphor and

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[3] Robert Holkeboer and Nadean Bishop, "Wordsworth on Words," *The Wordsworth Circle*, 6 (1975), 307.
[4] John Jones, *The Egotistical Sublime* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954), 197.
[5] Thomas Weiskel, "Wordsworth and the Defile of the Word," *Georgia Review* 29 (1975), 154-80.
[6] Frances Ferguson, *Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 155-72.
[7] Frank D. McConnell, *The Confessional Imagination: A Reading of Wordsworth's "Prelude,"* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 120-21.

other figures, eludes conventional terminology. Hartman has cited "web of transfers" for the subtle metaphors in the visionary passages.[8] However, Murray goes further in analyzing the use of devices such as consonance, repetition, synechdoche, and personification in the poems of 1800 to argue that the function of these figures within respective poems is much more integral than mere embellishment. Referring to terminology deriving from classical rhetoric, Murray claims that the term "figure of thought" describes them more accurately since it connotes a device more consciously employed and that more closely reflects the poet's apprehension of his subject than "figure of language" which includes tropes and schemes of rhetoric.[9] The point is that Wordsworth can be shown to employ traditional categories of rhetoric with a heightened sense of their congruence with the subject at hand. In the case of personification, for example, Murray demonstrates how, in its strategic employment by the poet in certain visionary episodes, it has an analogical appropriateness to the empathic encounter being depicted, so that the actual bestowing of the animate quality on the image has been anticipated and serves, when it occurs, to objectify the approximation and its epiphanic shock.[10]

This kind of self-consciousness in Wordsworth's language practice has been corroborated by others. In tracing Wordsworth's stylistic development from *Descriptive Sketches* to *The Prelude*, Bowman Wiley illustrates how, within the classical simplicity of the latter poem, personifications along with epithets, catalogues, and even two epic similes, are realized as "precise analogues for emotional states."[11] Josephine Miles stands out for recognizing the impact intended in Wordsworth's use of simple, unmodified names for objects and feelings in the poems from 1798 on,[12] and she is followed, again by Bowman Wiley who sees in Wordsworth's unqualified, generalized, concrete and descriptive

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[8] Geoffrey Hartman H. Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787-1814* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 66.
[9] Roger N. Murray, *Wordsworth's Style: Figures and Themes in "Lyrical Ballads" of 1800*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 37.
[10] Murray, 43-58.
[11] Bowman G. Wiley," The Clear Synthesis: A Study of Wordsworth's Stylistic Development as a Descriptive Poet from 1793-1808," *Salzburg Studies in English Literature under the Direction of Prof. Erwin A. Stuerzl*, No. 16 (1974), 186.
[12] Josephine Miles, *Wordsworth and the Vocabulary of Emotion* (1942; rpt. New York: Octagon, 1965), 139.

nouns, a counter-gesture to the stock epithets and periphrases of eighteenth century style.[13] Paul D. Sheats also notes that Wordsworth's diction "is strictly disciplined according to the epistemological status of its referent" and that nouns denoting "sensible objects" are "absolutely literal."[14] When these observations are considered in light of Wordsworth's proposal in the 1800 Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, to adopt "language really used by men" and his general predilection for the simple "prose names" of things,[15] we must recognize, if nothing else, the error of taking his style at face value, and of considering either it or his prose statements about language, in isolation.

II.

Any approach to Wordsworth should involve some consideration of the philosophical climate of the time which, on the level of language, was basically one of skepticism. Locke's emphasis in Book III of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* on the symbolic character of language and, specifically, on the voluntary—that is, arbitrary—relationship between words and ideas, had an impact on empiricist tradition generally.[16] Locke himself leaned toward conservatism in the practice of language: he proposed a picture dictionary, opposed metaphor in general, and recommended that men "talk of nothing but what they have clear and distinct ideas of."[17] However, the effect of Locke's influences on others leads in another direction. Recognizing the "voluntary" relationship between words and ideas in his essay *On the Sublime and Beautiful*, Burke follows Locke in citing that class of words ("compound abstract") which, on the basis of custom, evoke emotion without raising a sensible image in the mind, words such as "honour," "love," "liberty."[18] In practice Burke actually defers to that brand of the sublime in poetry characterized by generalized, suggestive diction, citing in his essay, descriptions of "cloudy grandeur" from Homer, Virgil and Milton.[19] In this he is seen to reflect more the influence of

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[13] Wiley, 139.
[14] Paul D. Sheats, *The Making of Wordsworth's Poetry 1785-1798* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) 21.
[15] W.J.B. Owen, *Wordsworth As Critic* (University of Toronto Press, 1969), 21.
[16] Herbert Rauter, *Die Sprachauffassug der englischen Vorromantik in ihrer Bedeutung für die Litheraturkritik und Dichtungstheorie der Zeit,* Frankfurter Beiträge zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik (Berlin: Verlag Gehlen, 1970), 15-41.
[17] Quoted in Dixon Wecter, "Burke's Theory Concerning Words, Images, and Emotion," *PMLA* 55 (1940), 172.
[18] Edmund Burke*, On the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier and Sons, 1937), 54-60.
[19] Wecter, 173.

Berkeley than Locke. [20]

David Hartley exemplifies an alternative more consistent with the spirit of Locke's empiricism. In *Observations on Man*, Harltey, too, postulates the power of single words to evoke a response without an intervening idea state, but in the course of examining the relative "naturalness" of figures of speech, Hartley advocates the use of concrete, sensual words as most efficacious for communication.[21]

Of the two directions exemplified by Burke and Hartley, Wordsworth clearly follows in the latter, more empirically oriented view, whether consciously influenced by Hartley's *Observations On Man* or not.[22] This is not to say, of course, that abstract diction has no role in his poetry, especially the more mature, visionary poems after 1800. The point is that what Coleridge has called the "matter-of-factness" in certain of Wordsworth's poems, where he stipulates, "a laborious minuteness and fidelity in the representation of objects" as well as "the insertion of accidental circumstances, in order to the full explanation of his living characters, their dispositions and actions," [23] is congruent with Hartley's preference for the concrete and with the associationist orientation toward visual imagery in general.[24] We need only to examine certain of the original *Lyrical Ballads* or the lyrics added in the 1807 edition to see the importance Wordsworth attributed to place names and terms from local dialect in order to give concreteness as well as factual and experiential underpinning to his poems. The notes on geographic names in "To Joanna," "Rural Architecture" and *The Waggoner* (1845) illustrate this particular focus, and in a letter from 1805, Wordsworth specifically requests Walter Scott to assist him in "Yarrow Revisited" by substituting some place name "that may really be found in the Vale of Yarrow" for the one he, Wordsworth, had "borrowed" for the time being.[25] Similarly, the inclusion of

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[20] Rauter, 42-67.
[21] David Hartley, *Observations on Man*, facsim. (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1966), 284-89.
[22] Wordsworth knew Hartley's book, but it has not been possible to document his acquaintance with Burke's essay. He appears to have known Burke mainly through his speeches. CF. Kurt Leinemann *Die Belesenheit von William Wordsworth* (1908; rpt. Folcroft Press, 179). Direct influence is not the point of my argument here.
[23] Samuel T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria,* ed. George Watson, Everyman's Library (1817; New York: Dutton, 1956), 251.
[24] Arthur G. Beatty, *William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art in Their Historical Relations* University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, No. 17 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1922), 59-60.

"anecdotes" in prefatory comments to some poems to establish their relationship to actual experiences, has been noted by Legouis[26] and can be seen in Dorothy's letter on the origin of "Stepping Westward,"where the question actually uttered by the peasant girl becomes the refrain of the poem.[27] Also of interest for the discussion of language is Wordsworth's own explanation, to Lady Beaumont, that his fourth Daisy poem, "To the Daisy," was written in memory of a letter from his brother and that, more importantly, "Some of the expressions in the Poem are the very words he used in his Letter."[28] This approach to concreteness had resulted in the charge, made early by Robert Southey, that Wordsworth seems to have associated more feeling with particular expressions and images than he is able to convey to others.[29]

The implications of Wordsworth's efforts to employ expressions and place names as a means of bonding his poems to empirical fact, are, ultimately, that his commitment to "the real language of men" over conventional "poetic diction" in the 1800 Preface was not a vague primitivistic ideal but was, instead, part of a conscious aesthetic purpose.[30] Critics have repeatedly noted the confusion that exists regarding Wordsworth's use of the terms "language" and "diction," and one critic, Marjorie Barstow Greenbie, even claims that Wordsworth's most radical departure from Eighteenth-Century style in the ballads occurs in the realm of syntax rather than vocabulary.[31] The point remains, however, that in the context of his own expressed purposes in letters and notes to poems, Wordsworth was quite conscious in his use both of syntax and individual words; and this is especially true for his use of common names of things in place of stylized epithets.

Regarding the second facet of Wordsworth's "matter-of-factness," what Coleridge had referred

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[25] *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years 1787-1805*, ed. Ernest de Seleincourt; rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: clarendon Press, 1967), 530-31. Cited hereafter as *Early Years.*
[26] Emile Legouis, *The Early Life of William Wordsworth 1770-1798*, trans. J. W. Matthews (London: J.W. Dent and Sons, 1921) 434-35.
[27] *Early Years*, 606.
[28] *Early Years*, 613.
[29] Quoted in Josephine Miles *The Vocabulary of Emotion,* 62.
[30] *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, ed. W.J.B. Owen (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 71; 75.
[31] Marjorie Barstow Greenbie, *Wordsworth's Theory of Poetic Diction*, Yales Studies in English, 57 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917), 151-62.

to as the "laborious minuteness and fidelity " of his descriptions and "the insertion of accidental circumstances" where this involves concreteness generally as well as specific allusions to actual places and incidents, discussed earlier—on this level also we must find Wordsworth committed to a conscious aesthetic purpose. Klaus Dockhorn's discussion of the ethos-pathos categories of classical rhetoric that demonstrably influenced Wordsworth's critical perspective and terminology in the 1800 Preface, has important implications for one aspect of the poetics of the *Lyrical Ballads*. Dockhorn has shown, first, that Wordsworth makes a fundamental distinction between "ethos" as characteristic actions, habits, and modes of behavior, on one hand, and "pathos," on the other, as strong, uncharacteristic and potentially disturbing emotion. More importantly, he shows that where many preromantic writers followed Longinus and identified "pathos" with the "sublime" whose popular idiom called for vague, suggestive, generalized diction, Wordsworth consciously adhered to the older dictum of classical rhetoric as seen in Quintilian or Aristotle, that genuine pathos is achieved through particularity, that is, through accurate portrayal of the "manners" and circumstances associated with and accompanying the passion.[32] It seems also, as Dockhorn suggests, that it was somewhat of an obsessive attention to the aesthetic role of the particular and circumstantial in this context, which led Wordsworth to consider that the "manners" of people in rustic life and "connected with the permanent objects of nature" would necessarily be a more "noble" subject for poetry than the "transitory manners reflecting the wearisome, unintelligible obliquities of city life."[33]

In light of of Dockhorn's insights, then we have to consider the "laborious minuteness and fidelity" of Wordsworth's descriptions from a somewhat different perspective, keeping in mind their

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[32] Klaus Dockhorn, "Wordsworth und die rhetorische Tradition in England," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Phil. Hist.Kl*. (1944), 255-92; "Die Rhetorick als Quelle der vorromantischen Irrationalismus in der Literatur und Geistesgeschiche," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Phil.-Hist.Kl.* (1949), 138. The fact of Wordswoth's acquaintance with the tradition of classical rhetoric in general is assumed by Dockhorn and later critics including Herbert Lindenberger. It has been documented that Wordsworth studied Latin and the elements of Greek at Hawkeshead Grammar School (See Morris Marples, *Romantics at School* (New York, 1967) and that he read a number of classic writers, especially Roman See Ronald B. Hearn, *The Road to Rydal Mount*, 1973 where the school's library included a copy of Quintilian's *De Insitutione Oratoria.*

[33] *Early Years*, 255.

association by the poet with true pathos. From the opening description of the old traveler in *Guilt and Sorrow,* who is presented immediately with "feet half bare," and "stooping" gait, "but not as far as if to gain / Help from the staff he bore," whose "mien and air / Were hardy, though his cheek seemed worn with care,"[34] to the Pastor's narration of local biographies in *The Excursion* (Books VI and VII), Wordsworth's critical intentions are the same. As he comments to Catherine Clarkson on an unfavorable response to the *Excursion* stories,

> Could your correspondent read the description of Robert and the fluctuations of hope and fear in Margaret's mind . . . without a bedimmed eye then I pity her.[35]

We can see also why Wordsworth articulates the close connection between this aesthetic principle regarding pathos, and a moral one. In the second "Essay upon Epitaphs," Wordsworth criticizes Pope's epitaph on Mrs. Corbet, noting that "Nothing is represented implicitly, that is, with its accompaniment of circumstances or conveyed by its effects" and that "The Author forgets that it is a living creature that must interest us" in thus "coldly and unfeelingly" abstracting the good qualities.[36] Wordsworth viewed epitaphs as an occasion where "The general sympathy ought to be quickened, provoked, and diversified, by particular thoughts, actions, images—circumstances of an age, occupation, manner of life" that pertained to the dead person, though such details should be also "bound together and solemnized into one harmony."[37]

III.

It should be apparent by now that the subject of language in Wordsworth's poetry is complex and that we should hesitate to talk in terms of failures and triumphs or adequacies and in adequacies in given works without clearly establishing the focus as primarily metaphoric, thematic, or stylistic. It is true that the character of Wordsworth's poetics seems to defy such hard and fast boundaries and that

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[34] T*he Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, vol. I, ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) 190.
[35] *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years Part II 1812-1820*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 170.
[36] *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, 147.
[37] *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, 129.

consequently, we find many critics needing to coin new terms such as "reality image," "transferences" "concrete metaphor," "images and interaction," and others.[38]

Thanks to the critical tradition, we do, however, have significant insight into the areas of Wordsworth's technique in the 1800 poems as it reflects his interest in the problematic relationship of language to experience and also into the consciousness with which he employs or rejects particular poetic devices with an eye to their analogical appropriateness to the object or incident being portrayed. In addition, Wordsworth's close knowledge of literary and aesthetic tradition, including classical rhetoric specifically, has been elucidated by critics including Dockhorn and Lindenberger.[39] Within this context, this paper will investigate the implications and poetic value of "naming" as a particular facet of Wordsworth's technique in selected lyrics and narratives, most of which were published before 1807, as well as in *The Prelude*.[40] Naming is understood to comprise name bestowal as a thematic and rhetorical gesture in the poems as well as the use of actual proper nouns and collective and abstract nouns rendered "names" through personification, capitalization or modification by "the." In light of what Josephine Miles has shown about the role of simple, unmodified names in Wordsworth's technique of poetic reform,[41] and in light of the fact, also, that Wordsworth provides for a separate category of "Poems on the naming of Places," a study of relevant poems before 1807 is warranted. The implications of such an approach to *The Prelude* are even more striking since Wordsworth was conscious of his own innovation in writing about himself in a serious poem of such length, "a thing unprecedented in Literary History," as he admitted to George Beaumont. [42] Also, the interesting

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[38] Jones, 85; Hartman, 66; Murray, 105ff.; Herbert Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth's "Prelude"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1963), 69ff.

[39] Lindenberger, 3-39.

[40] Exceptions to 1807 as a cut-off date for first publication are *The Waggoner* and *Peter Bell*, both published in 1819. *The Waggoner* was first composed in 1806 and *Peter Bell* in 1799-1800. Wordsworth intended to publish both in the 1815 edition of the poems but held them back, fearing ridicule. See Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: The Later Years 1803-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1965), 368-69. Also, "Forth from a Jutting Ridge" is discussed among the "Poems on the Naming of Places" though, in fact, it was not added until 1845; "When, to the Attractions of a Busy World," in the same group, was not published until 1815 though it had been composed by 1802. Finally the "Love Lies Bleeding" poems, discussed briefly under the category of "Fancy" were first published in 1842.

[41] Miles, 124ff.

fusion of epic or "Grand Style" language with the epistolary, first-person point of view in *The Prelude* suggests a new and broader role for the rhetoric and imagery connected with naming than is seen in Wordsworth's predecessors. Most important, *The Prelude* as an autobiographical and "philosophic poem" provides a unique occasion to discuss language from a metaphysical as well as a stylistic point of view.

It is reasonable , in a study of this nature, to expect that the role of names and naming will be more easily and readily identified in the shorter lyrics prior to and including the 1807 edition than in the narratives of that period or in *The Prelude*. Particularly in the poems on "Naming of Places," the function of the gesture of name bestowal is easier to recognize and to analyze in terms of the "meditative" structure of the encounter poem, as described by M. H. Abrams.[43] We can also expect that the lyrics on flowers and birds from the same edition, poems whose structure turns on the rejection of a series of metaphoric names for a simpler common name, will illustrate some of Wordsworth's own generalizations about diction.

The conclusions that emerge concerning the role of names and naming in the longer auto-biographical narrative *of The Prelude* will necessarily be more complex. It is clear from the Prefaces to the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1800 and 1802, that Wordsworth was particularly conscious of the appropriateness that rhetorical devices must have in relation to the subject; we have seen also that he was aware of the value and impact of specificity in imagery. Thus we can expect that any instances involving names or naming will be intentional and strategic in *The Prelude*. Also, because the poet treats his own relation-ship to words and language as a theme in *The Prelude*, it is likely that his use of names and naming will assume thematic significance. We can go further and suggest that act of naming will emerge as a counter –gesture to the many expressions of self-doubt and apology articulated by the persona of this poem, both epic and personal, "a thing unprecedented in Literary History."[44]

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[42] *Early Years*, 586.
[43] M. H. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric*," From Sensibility to Romanticism*, eds. F. Hilles and H. Bloom (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 527-61.
[44] See above.

CHAPTER II

NAMING IN SELECTED POEMS BEFORE 1807

In our preceding discussion of Wordsworth's language theory, we have noted the significance of the poet's ability to provide ties between his poems and empirical fact by means of place names and quoted expressions. As we examine the variety of poems in the categories of "Child hood," "Affections," Fancy," Imagination," and "Naming of Places," we note that a kind of factual underpinning in the form of footnotes to names and expressions as well as anecdotes, is generally characteristic.[45] Thus Wordsworth includes a definition of both "Ghyll" and "Force," words from the Cumberland and Westmoreland dialects, in "The Idle Shepherd Boys," a description of "Helm-crag," a peak named in *The Waggoner,* of "Great How," the hill in "Rural Architecture," and of "The Great Gavel" and "The Leeza," and hill and a river respectively in *The Brothers*.

Wordsworth was also accustomed to supplying notes to his earlier poems including *Descriptive Sketches* and *Evening Walk*, where such notes pertained not only to geographic details but sometimes also to literary sources and parallels. In any case, the effect of these details and explanations for the geographic names incorporated in the shorter pastoral and descriptive poems before 1807, does more than give empirical validity to the description: it gives the names a suggestive weight they would otherwise not have, so that the reader, encountering the image, is impressed with a sense of its having an identity in space and time which is acknowledged and accentuated but not yet defined or limited by the context of the poem. The descriptive and background notes can be said thus to add what Paul de Man calls "ontological" weight to specific images in the poem.[46]

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[45] Wordsworth first published the "Poems on the Naming of Places" in 1800 though at that time, the category did not include "When to the Attractions of a Busy World" for "Forth from a Jutting Ridge," published in 1815 and 1845 respectively. The categories of "Childhood," "Affections" "Fancy," and "Imagination" first appeared in 1815; however, Wordsworth occasionally transferred poems from one category to another over the years (See Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: The Later Years 1803-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) 270-72. My discussion reflects Wordsworth's final revision as indicated in the text of 1849-50, unless otherwise specified.

[46] Paul de Man, "Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image," *Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), 65-77.

I

In one of the examples mentioned, "The Idle Shepherd Boys, or Dungeon-Ghyll Force," the place name is presented as part of the title, the author having indicated by his note that a valley and a stream should be visualized with the terms "ghyll" and "force," respectively. By way of anticipation from the title, we know that some memorable event will take place at or near Dungeon-Ghyll Force. The first two and a half stanzas use simple imagery to depict the shepherds piping amid young bleating lambs. Suddenly they hear "a plaintive cry . . . from the depth of Dungeon-Ghyll" (32-33). [47] The cry continues as one challenges the other to cross the ghyll; when both cross, they find, midway, that a lamb is trapped in the stream beneath. "A Poet" finally saves the lamb and then upbraids the idle boys so that they emerge presumably sadder but wiser from the event.

Although this unobtrusive piece is not in the category "Naming of Places"—it comes in fact under "Childhood"—the importance of the place name, "Dungeon-Ghyll" in memorializing this "night journey" experience for the shepherd boys is implied. The only other proper noun to occur is "Langdale," once and incidentally, aside from the names "Walter" and "James." Otherwise, we have "Those Shepherds," "Shepherd-Boys," "Poet," and "Bard." Clearly the concreteness of the title name, "Dungeon-Ghyll Force" along with the visual associations afforded by the note, suggest its importance on the thematic level of the poem.

Something of the pattern Wordsworth reveals in this poem becomes more emphatic in the "Poems on Naming of Places." Of the poems in this category, "It was an April Morning," "To Joanna," "There is an Eminence," " A Narrow Girdle of Rough Stones," "To M.H." "When to the Attractions of a Busy World," and "Forth from a Jutting Ridge," only "To Joanna" and To. M.H." are titled by Wordsworth. He does prefix and "Advertisement" to the group, however, in which he mentions unpretentiously that as "persons resident in the country" give names to places on the basis of "Incidents" that have occurred or "feelings" experienced of "private and peculiar interest," so he, the

[47] *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, rev. Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1936). 67. All subsequent line references to the poems are from this edition.

author and his friends have bestowed names on places from the wish to "give some sort of record to" and "renew the gratification of" such feelings: the respective poems, he notes, were written "in consequence" of such namings.[48] A likely implication of this statement is that the poems are analogous to the names themselves in their function as memorials. At the same time, we can recognize a distinction between these poems which turn, structurally, on the metaphoric act of naming, and the actual genre of inscriptional poetry as continued through Wordsworth's own time. His poems and even, to some extent, his own "Inscriptions," lack the sense of resignation or of urgency found in true elegy or in the inscriptional topos exemplified in such poems as Spenser's Sonnet LXXV from Amoretti, "One Day I Wrote her Name upon the Strand," or Shakespeare's Sonnet LV, "Not Marble Nor the Guilded Monuments." Also in contrast to elegy and the inscriptional topos, Wordsworth's naming poems do not make their purpose of memorializing evident from the beginning.

In the first group, "It was an April Morning," the poet describes a vernal scene with a "Rivulet" and only after twenty lines finally mentions the actual setting to be memorialized, the "continuous glen" where the stream "sent forth . . . sallies of glad sound"(23). With "To M.H." and "When, to the Attractions of a Busy World" the focal spot, a "thick umbrage," and a "Vale," respectively, is denoted only as an incidental detail within the first sentence, and the reader confronts a larger picture with a succession of geographic names or details, one or two of which are then singled out, in effect. The approach in "There is an Eminence and "a Narrow Girdle of Rough Stones, is somewhat different and more effective. After denoting the "Eminence" itself in the first of these three poems, the speaker adds elaborative detail and offers the alternative name of "Peak," after which he associates the eminence with the "star of Jove" that "is never half so fair / As when he shines above it" (10-12). Here we see a movement toward the attributing of animacy to the place prior the poet's disclosure that "She" who shares a gratifying love with him, "Hath to this lonely / Summit given my Name" (17).

In the second poem mentioned above, minute details are added to the setting initially

[48] *Poetical Works*, 116.

portrayed, the "Narrow girdle of rough stones," and it is one of these minor details in particular that objectifies the speaker's discovery of vision and meaning in the whole:

> Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft,
> Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
> That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
> Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand!
> And starting off again with freak as sudden;
> In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
> Making report of an invisible breeze
> That was its wings, its chariot and its horse,
> Its playmate, rather say, its moving soul. (17-25)

We note the manner in which the life force and meaning are attributed to the detail of the "dandelion seed or thistle's beard"—even in this juxtaposition, the second image anticipates the bestowal. But the true identity of the dandelion seed is discovered through the rejection of a string of metaphors for the breeze, "its wings," "its chariot," "its horse," "its playmate, when the speaker ultimately uses a self-correction to call it "its moving soul."

This same pattern is repeated with variation for the detail of the water fern, beginning in line 29, one of which is singled out as having been "of the Queen Osmunda named" and so far above other types in its "retired abode / On Grasmere's beach" that it is lovelier "than Naiad by the side / Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere / Sole sitting by the shores of old romance (34-38). Here we see the rejected similes and mythological parallels adding weight to the associations of the fern in question (commonly termed now the "royal fern"). The point, however, is that these smaller instances that subtly involve name bestowal, anticipate the main act of naming on which the poems each turns.

The main action of "A narrow Girdle of Rough Stones" involves a spot of time where the speaker and his childhood friends encounter the awesome figure of "a Man / Attired in peasant's garb" (47-48) whose reluctance to participate in the gleaning provokes them to label him impulsively as "'Improvident and reckless'" (49) until they are shocked by the recognition that he is "worn down / By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks" (58-59). Consequently this place receives a name

suggestive of allegory: "POINT RASH-JUDGEMENT" (80). What is more, the speaker remains demure over their precipitous judgment, and he even self-consciously qualifies the appellation bestowed as "a memorial name, uncouth indeed / As e'er by mariner was given to bay / Or foreland, on a new discovered coast" (77-79).

Although the poems in this group share the basic structure of (1) a setting with noteworthy details, (2) a moment of perception provoked or objectified by one or more such details, usually when in the company of a peer or loved one, and (3) the bestowal of a name suggested by the experience; two of the poems, "To Joanna" and "When to the Attractions of a Busy World" stand out for their more complex use of narrative time.

The speaker in "To Joanna" begins by elaborating the contrast between his own dwelling place in retirement, and the urban childhood of the poem's addressee who is named in the apostrophe only in line 12, "we love you well, Joanna!" With the poem's second part, however, the narrative commences an indirect report of an exchange that occurred in the place to be memorialized between the speaker and a Vicar from the house nearby. The occasion for the Vicar's attention is the speaker having "chiseled out / Some uncouth name upon the native rock" in "characters / Of formidable size" (28-30). At this point, we still have no "moment " of perception and thus no reason for the memorial name eventually provided in the text. We know only that the poet is made to feel culpable for the name carving by the Vicar who characterizes the act as "Reviving obsolete idolatry . . . like a Runic Priest" (27-28). On this particular detail, moreover, Wordsworth provides a note about an old, partly effaced inscription on native rock in Cumberland and Westmoreland being mistaken for Runic when they were apparently of Roman origin.[49] This tie to ancient history certainly enhances the suggestiveness of the name carving image in the poem, the name itself being as yet unstipulated in the text although we expect that it will be Joanna's name.

The moment of perception finally occurs in the third movement of the narrative. The speaker tells the Vicar how, when he and Joanna were one in this setting, the beauty of the place in all of its

[49] *Poetical Works*, 117.

detail merged into “one impression” and was “imaged in the heart”: and when he looked at Joanna, she registered sympathetic joy with laughter (50-53). More important, the consequences of this shared epiphany for the landscape are vividly rendered with personification of the landscape features themselves and use of proper names:

> The Rock like something starting from a sleep,
> Took up the Lady’s voice and laughed again,
> That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
> Was ready with her cavern; Hammer-scar
> And the tall Steep of Liver-how, sent forth
> A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard
> And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone,
> Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
> Carried the Lady’s voice,--old Skiddaw blew
> His speaking-trumpet;--back out of the clouds
> Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
> And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head. (54-65)

It is an interesting point here that the symbolic life force that anticipates the landscape by means of personification in the mountain names and in the terms “voice,” “answer,” “heard,” and the like, is subtle, employing such figurative expressions as might be used in everyday speech. The only unusual figure is seen in “Helm-crag,” called the “ancient Woman” because of the visual suggestion in the rock formation, a detail confirmed in Wordsworth’s note. Thus the natural inclination to metaphor as a capacity of ordinary speech arising from observed experience, is illustrated here, so that the proper nouns succeeding “that ancient Woman. . . on Helm-crag,”—“Hammar-scar,” “Silver-how,” and “Fairfield,”—might just as easily arise and probably did arise from perceived analogues in an earlier stage of the language. We know that Wordsworth shared the contemporary interest in the metaphoric character of primitive languages from his comment in the 1802 Appendix to the Preface to the Lyrical *Ballad*s, about the language of the earliest poets being “daring and figurative.”[50] It is a concern he could have found in Hartley but which was widespread enough in its own right.[51]

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[50] *Wordsworth’s Literary Criticism*, ed. W. B. J. Owen (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul,1974) 90.

Significantly for the poem at hand, it is in the wake of these mountain names and the poet's confession that his inspiration could have been imaginary or real, that he announces,

> I chiseled out in those rude characters
> Joanna's name deep in the living stone: --
> And I, and all who dwell at my fireside,
> Have called the lovely rock JOANNA'S ROCK. (82-85)

The proper name bestowed on this rock, now "the living stone" by the poet thus takes its place with "the ancient Woman" and the other mountain names as a sign and indicator of latent meaning from past experience.

"When, to the Attractions of a Busy World," is similarly complex in time structure. The narration begins directly by presenting the "Fir-grove" (9) in the "peaceful Vale"(3) as the special reflective spot complete with birds and sheep that are subtly but significantly personified: the birds "repaired" thither, made that "house / Of nature . . . their home" while the sheep would "watch" his movements (18-28). Subsequently the meaning of the place becomes more intense for the poet when he describes a period during winter snows when he could not locate his favorite haunt, only to find toward spring that the beloved brother who had visited during the interim, had found it and had left a foot path to the very place sought by the poet. From this point on, the poem becomes a tribute to the brother and the deeper sympathies shared by the two,[52] and the symbolic value of the naming gesture, mentioned indirectly in this case , is less emphatic than is a general sense of "spirit of place." After commending his brother with the name of "A *silent* Poet," (80) the speaker asserts that he could not "withhold thy honoured name" from the spot and that, consequently, "now I love the fir grove with a perfect love" (86-87). Thus the locus of the fir grove itself becomes a memorial, identified by the past experience with the brother and intended as a site for their desired

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[51] Herbert Rauter, *Die Sprachauffassung der englishen Vorromanticker in ihrer Bedeutung für die Literaturkrtik und Dichtungstheorie der Zeit*, Frankfurter Beitrage zur Anglistik und Amerikanistic (Berlin: Verlag Gehlen, 1970) 164 ff.

[52] Wordsworth's brother John had drowned in a shipwreck in 1805; Although this poem was reputedly finished in 1802, it was first published in 1815. A "Note" at the conclusion acknowledges that the wish of a second meeting could not be granted because of the death. Cf. *Poetical Works*, 119-20.

but unrealized reunion "in Grasmere's happy Vale" (110).

The two poems, "To Joanna" and "When to the Attractions of a Busy World," have one important feature of contrast with regard to naming: the role of the visualized name itself as an image. In the first case the poet prepares us for the experience shared with Joanna by apostrophizing her, and in the second movement of the narrative, describing himself as having "chiseled out / Some uncouth name upon the native rock . . . in characters / Of formidable size" (28-30). He concludes, though, with the declaration that "I chiseled out in those rude characters / Joanna's name deep in the living rock" so that it came to be called "JOANNA'S ROCK" (82-85).

These references to the chiseled name and the final visualization and "re-presencing" of the name "JOANNA'S ROCK," are quite in contrast to the second poem where the speaker says merely that he could not "withhold" the brother's name from the spot but never names the name per se. Of the seven poems classified as "Naming of Places," however, only one other, "There is an Eminence," omits articulating the actual name bestowed. And in most cases Wordsworth adds visual impact to the bestowed name by using all upper case, so that the name is foregrounded in the text in the manner of an emblem: Hence, "EMMA'S DELL," "JOANNA'S ROCK," "POINT RASH-JUDGMENT," "MARY," for whom a nook is named in to "M.H.," and, in the 1845 poem ("Forth from the Jutting Ridge,") "MARY'S and "SARAH'S claim to the two pinnacles.[53]

In Geoffrey Hartman's seminal article on the general influence of the inscriptional mode on Romantic lyric poetry, the importance of "inscribing, naming, writing" as "types of a commemorative and inherently elegiac act" is cited.[54] Hartman refers also to the "Lines" in the title of Wordsworth's Poem, "Lines . . . Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree . . . " as an image replacing the actual "wayside inscription" or epitaph as a call and invitation to the reader to meditate on the experience then to be unfolded. In this function the "Lines . . . Left upon a Seat" are analogous to the vividly distinct images

[53] Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Wordsworth, Inscriptions, and Romantic Nature Poetry," *From Sensibility to Romanticism*, eds. F. Hilles and H. Bloom (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 389-413.
[54] Hartman, 401.

of the pond, moss hill and stunted tree in "The Thorn," the three pillars in "Hart-Leap Well," or the sheep-fold in "Michael."[55]

From what we have shown of the structure of the poems on "Naming of Places," however, this function of summoning the reader-traveler into the meditation encompassed by the poem is reserved rather for focal landscape images, while the naming itself occurs ultimately as a confirming or sealing gesture for an earlier visionary "spot of time." Hartman implies this distinction by suggesting that naming in these poems is rather "a joyfully spontaneous act that almost escapes elegiac implications."[56]

We can go a step further and suggest that "sacramental" or "symbolic" is an appropriate term for the role of naming in these poems.[57] When we consider the role of Wordsworth's naming here in relation to the general "meditative" structure or the Romantic lyric, the suggestive scene or object inducing a train of thought that leads to an epiphanic moment of vision,[58] we note that Wordsworth characteristically objectifies such moments with personified images such as the speaking mountains in "To Joanna" or the humanized birds in "When to the Attractions of a Busy World." Naming is not used to convey the kernel experience of vision in these poems, nor does it serve as the initial beckoning or "lead-in" detail. Name bestowal can, and I think, does, function as a kind of paradigm, after the fact, of the "greeting of the Spirit" involved in the central visionary encounter of each poem because the poet is consciously recreating the significance of what happened in a given spot in designating its name. By analogy, such name bestowal also becomes a type for the ideal relationship of language to experience, where language becomes an "emanation" or "incarnation,' using Wordsworth's own words, of real passion.[59]

Finally, the role of visual foregrounding given to actual names in the text through

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[55] Hartman, 401.
[56] Hartment, 412*n*.
[57] The words "sacramental" is applied to Wordsworth's view of nature by David Ferry in *The Limits of Mortality: an Essay on Wordsworth's Major Poems* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1959). Ferry says that Wordsworth Sometimes regarded nature "in the mode of eternity" or as "symbolic of eternity. See page 29.
[58] M. H. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric," *From Sensibility to Romanticism,* 527-61.
[59] *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, 154.

capitalization should not be underestimated.[60] The manner in which the reader discovers the name as a visual phenomenon at the conclusion of five of these poems amounts to re-presencing of the name and serves to reinforce its symbolic or sacramental function. Wordsworth continues throughout his career to use capitalization as well as italics and, occasionally, a special Gothic type for given words and phrases as a vehicle of emphasis—often with impact comparable to what we see in the "Poems on the Naming of Places."[61]

It is helpful at this point to make one further distinction regarding the name imagery in these poems. The poet in "To Joanna" specified chiseling out "an uncouth name . . . in characters of formidable size," a name which we later find to be Joanna's but which, in its vague and rough appearance, causes the vicar to think it is a runic inscription. Again, this detail is not integral to the meditative structure of the poem in the terms we have been discussing. But the combination of the unstipulated identity of the name with the detail of its being chiseled in the rock, renders the word an object of interest. Within the stanza, then, the chiseled word functions as a beckoning device similar to the "Lines . . Left upon the Seat in a Yew-Tree" though, in this case, the discourse promised by the poet to Joanna serves that purpose for the poem as a whole. Interestingly, Wordsworth would continue to make use of this image of visualized but unspecified words or names for provocative effect in later poems including *Peter Bell* and, memorably, in *The Prelude* where the example of the murderer's carved name in Book XII inspired fear and a sense of chastisement in the young boy's imagination.[62]

II.

Use of proper names and the theme of bestowing names has still broader implications in some of the longer narratives before 1807. Before considering these poems individually, however,

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[60] The term "foregrouding' has been applied to poetry by Geoffrey N. Leech in *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1969),57. Leech cites P. L. Garvin, trans., *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics and Style* (Washington, D. C. 1958). The term designates the character of an artistic deviation, such as a figure of speech, which "sticks up" from its background much like an object in the foreground of a visual field.

[61] For the use of Gothic type to set off a quoted line, Cf. "The Force of Prayer, or The Founding of Bolton Priory: A Tradition," and the name of "Sir Alfred Erthing in *The Excursion*, VII, l. 971. *Poetical Works,* 387, 680.

[62] *Poetical Works*, 577-78.

it is interesting to note some of the critical controversy regarding Wordsworth's use of repetition since repetition emerges as a central feature in the earliest narratives to be discussed: "The Idiot Boy," "The Thorn," and "Michael."

Roger Sharrock discusses imagery in these three poems, "The Idiot Boy," "The Thorn," and "Michael" to conclude that Wordsworth's deliberate repetitions and tautologies originate in an awkward effort "to get behind poetry altogether and make a photograph (or a recording) of the raw data of human experience which might preserve the original emotion."[63] Frances Ferguson's more recent book on language in Wordsworth interprets the kind of repetition seen in "The Thorn" as an avoidance, or bypassing of articulation in the usual sense, where words would be understood as a vehicle in the relation of "signifier to signified." She cites Wordsworth's statement in the "Note to 'The Thorn, "that words in repetition are realized not only as "symbols of the passion, but as things, active and efficient, which are themselves part of the passion,"[64] to see Wordsworth as wanting, in effect, to substitute words in repetition as a "peripassion" or an "emotion about expressing" an emotion instead of the original emotion to be portrayed.[65]

There is a danger, however, in isolating this one facet of Wordworth's imagery, and likewise it may be misleading to read such repetition as an "obviation" of further utterance, to use Prof. Ferguson's own term."[66] W.J.B. Owen offers what might be a corrective view in his earlier reply to Sharrock, that Wordsworth's "aim" with each style "is the same," namely, "To present the object or event itself with its power implicit," and as he further suggests, "when such an object or event could be presented with sufficient effect by a literal transcript of his experience, he was content to allow it to work on the reader as the object or event has worked on himself."[67] When we consider the value attached by Wordsworth to accuracy in place names and spoken expressions as material for his poems,

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[63] Roger Sharrock, "Wordsworth's Revolt Against Literature," *Essays in Criticism*, 3 (1953), 396-412; reprinted in *Wordsworth's Mind and Art*, ed. A. W. Thomson (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1969, 56-94.
[64] *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, 97.
[65] Frances Ferguson, *Wordsworth: Language as Counter-spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 11-16.
[66] Ferguson, 12.
[67] W. J. B. Owen, *Wordsworth as Critic* (University of Toronto Press, 1969), 226-28.

along with his efforts to clarify and extend these names and utterances with explanatory footnotes and anecdotes in many cases, Owen's view is the more compelling.

In poems like "The Idiot Boy" and "The Thorn" repetition occurs in a variety of forms. One finds parallel sentence structure (parison), sometimes with the same initial word or words (anaphora), repetition of conjunctions (polysyndeton) or the simple repetition of single words, either in succession (epizeuxis) or more loosely within the larger structure (ploce).[68] For "The Idiot Boy" in particular, proper names of persons share largely in repetition that leads to a musical, incantatory effect. They are, however, names typical of ballads, with proper first names and short surnames (Betty Foy, Johnny, Susan Gale) and they have little claim as "empirical bonds" in the manner of previous examples. One name that does receive special emphasis is the common, unpoetic name itself, "Idiot Boy" which occurs five times in the refrain-like line, "Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy" (11-388) and more often throughout the poem simply as "her Idiot Boy." From the frequent use of the name it seems that Wordsworth's interest was in allowing the common name "Idiot Boy" to accumulate gradual associations of endearment and worth in the course of the narrative. This emphasis becomes clear in the conscious solicitude Wordsworth had shown in selecting the term "Idiot Boy." In a letter to John Wilson in 1802, Wordsworth mentions the problem he now recognizes with the word "idiot" which, at the time of composition, he had identified as the most accurate and neutral name. He says specifically that idiots were not associated in his mind with loathing or disgust and that the idiot in his poem was intended to connote "quite the contrary."[69]

What Wordsworth had hoped to achieve with the plain term "Idiot Boy" here anticipates his use of the image of the "Thorn" in the poem by that name, along with images of "Woman" and "Babe," all of which are consistently capitalized in his text. "The Thorn" begins unpretentiously enough, "There is a Thorn. . . "(1) but with the somewhat belabored repetition in virtually every stanza,

[68] I have attempted to establish the basis for Wordsworth's acquaintance with classical rhetoric in the previous chapter. My own use of terms in the discussion of Wordsworth's style is mainly in the interest of accuracy and consistency and not to insist that such terms were consciously on the poet's mind as he wrote.

[69] *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years 1787-1805*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) 352-58.

"the Thorn" emerges in the end as an emblem for all the associations tied to the place in the speaker's mind.[70] To this extent, the emotive repetition "Oh misery! oh misery" as a refrain in four stanzas reinforces the impact of the repeated "Thorn" image itself (the proper names of "Stephen Gill and grey-haired Wilfred" serve mainly as incidental details).

What we observe in "the Idiot Boy" and "The Thorn" is the deliberate and repeated use of a common name in a manner which allows each name, in the course of the respective narratives, to accrue associations important to the theme. The underlying interest in the mind's associational process is easily apparent here. That Wordsworth is using the gesture itself of repeating the names as a way of bypassing articulation, as Prof. Ferguson suggests, is less likely, we believe.

One important facet of Wordsworthian ballad narrative that is evident in both "The Idiot Boy" and "The Thorn" is the presence of a dramatic persona who comments to some degree on his relationsip to the narrative content. The speaker in "The Idiot Boy" seems to participate in the action by questioning the characters and responding to them; he also makes a climactic address to the "Reader" and twice to the "gentle Muses" in mock-heroic fashion (312, 339, 342). The old sea captain confesses both humility and constancy of purpose in connection with the events behind "The Thorn": "More know I not, I wish I did / And it should all be told to you" (144-45).[71]

Point of view in the more mature narratives of "Hart-Leap Well," "Michael," *The Waggoner* and *Peter Bell* is noticeably more complex than in "The Idiot Boy" and "The Thorn" in a manner that has important implications for the function of language and naming, in particular. First, simply by electing to use a persona as a mask, the author is tacitly removing himself from the speech event of the poem. The more he exploits the mask by making candid or self-conscious remarks on his role as narrator or on his use of language, the more apparent are his attempts to be, as Scholes and Kellogg have put it, "refining himself out of existence.[72] It is as though the poet, acknowledging the

[70] Josephine Miles, *Wordsworth and the Vocabulary of Emotion (*1942; rpt. New York: Octogon, 1965), 27-30.
[71] Stephen M. Parrish deals more specifically with the dramatic element in these poems in *The Art of the "Lyrical Ballads"*(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) while S. O. Stalin deals with point of view in Wordsworthian narrative in a dissertation, "Techniques of Narration in the Narrative Poems of William Wordswroth," *DAI* 35 (1974) 6682A-83A (University of Georgia).

fundamental difficulty of communicating with language, steps behind the text by means of a dramatic voice, a voice that cannot be equated directly with the poet himself. In this way, the author can be seen to lessen the burden of responsibility for his speech so that whatever inadequacies may or do emerge must be attributed to a "character" rather than to the author himself.

We can see how point of view adds complexity to the narration of "Hart-Leap Well" where an account of the event that provoked the name is followed by a second part where the original speaker tells in both his own words and the witness-shepherd's, the impact of visiting such a spot. Thus the author-narrator begins Part Two with a somewhat decorous dubitatio (doubt) as he alludes to the modesty of his own skill in preface to the narration:

> The moving accident is not my trade;
> To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:
> 'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
> To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts. (97-100)

Likewise the shepherd-witness, part of whose account is incorporated in Part Two, makes subtle use of self-deprecation (meiosis) to convey a sense of awe before the event. He says that "for my part / I've guessed" why the spot is now deserted but that "in my simple mind we cannot tell / What cause the Hart might have to love this place" (138-47). The self-conscious asides by these speakers effectively communicate the impression that a simple, direct narrative of the appearance of the spot and the event behind it, would be inadequate or even presumptuous, especially in view of its import in the eyes of the narrator.

The consequence of stepping back from the narration in this way and of avoiding, at the same time, the creation of a consistent or complete "character" for the narrator's mask, is that Wordsworth is able to transfer a certain expressive impact to the imagery of the poem.[73] Thus, toward the latter half of Part One, the details of the three hoof marks "imprinted on the grassy ground" (52) which leads to

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[72] Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 55.
[73]Robert Langbaum observes that Wordsworth's point of view puts more burden on "his visual presentations" because the utterances of his characters are not complete enough to form an identity. See *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1957), 71-72.

the three pillars, "each a rough-hewn stone . . planted where thy hoofs have grazed" (67-68) and finally, the name itself, "HART-LEAP WELL," visually foregrounded as in the other poems discussed, become accentuated. Wordsworth further attempts to add empirical weight to the poem with a descriptive headnote on the locus of the well in Yorkshire near "the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg." The point is that naming in "Hart-Leap Well," though not of the same structural importance as in the "Poems on the Naming of Places," is rendered more significant as a gesture and as a detail because of the way in which Wordsworth handles point of view.

The narrative poems, "Michael," *The Waggoner* and *Peter Bell* are very different in many ways, justifying, we assume, their eventual classification under "Affections," "Fancy," and "Imagination" respectively.[74] One important feature that they do have in common, though, is the interest that attaches to naming through the use of point of view in a manner similar to that of "Hart-Leap Well."

Regarding the imagery of "Michael," Roger Sharrock asserts what is now generally recognized, that with the treatment of the sheep-fold image and the cottage that "was named THE EVENING STAR," (139) Wordsworth was moving toward a more sophisticated understanding of symbol.[75] Roger Murray goes even further in showing that imagery in "Michael" is so consciously related to the effort to portray Michael himself as an emanation of his surroundings, that even the synechdochial images of "hand" and "heart" become important and articulate the bond between self and nature, a tie symbolized, finally, in the image of the unfinished sheep-fold.[76]

This dimension of "Michael" is related to what we might call the "sacramental" orientation of Wordsworth's language in the poem. It is perhaps first apparent in the narrative framework established by the dramatic persona. The speaker opens simply by giving directions to the habitation that becomes the setting of the poem, but an attitude of restraint toward his own act of narration is seen almost immediately. After describing the path beyond "Green-head Ghyll," (2) a place name with

[74] *The Waggoner*, published in 1819 was included in the category of "Affections" before being moved to "Fancy" in 1845.
[75] Sharrock, 67-68.
[76] Roger N. Murray, *Wordsworth's Style: Figures and Themes in "The Lyrical Ballads" of 1800* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 69-80.

which the poem will also close, he notes, “Nor should I have made mention of this Dell, / But for one object which you might pass by . . . (14-15). e continues in this vein to apologize for the story as being “unenriched with strange events / Yet not unifit, I deem, for the fireside / Or . . . summer shade” (18-19) and as being “A history / Homely and rude” which nevertheless leads him on to “feel” and “think . . . / On man, the heart of man, and human life” (30-35). Thus he stipulates that “this Tale” had power over him when he was yet “Careless of books,” (28) an emphasis that is also in keeping with Wordsworth’s often exaggerated deprecation of literary consciousness and sophistication. Again, at a key point midway in the narration, he denotes the impact of Luke’s birth on Michael by pointing to the obtrusion of language:

> why should I relate
> That objects which the Shepherd loved before
> Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
> Feelings and emanations . . . . (198-201)

Michael’s own shorter narrations reflect his restrained and what we may call “quietistic” demeanor when, for example, he draws back from criticizing the indenture—“‘Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus”(241)—and when he later tells the visibly moved Luke, “these are things of which I need not speak” (360).

In this way the persona sets up a criterion favoring that which is manifest and explicit over that which needs explanation or elaboration. He is willing to regard “the Tale” as a self-defined unit with its own power to affect “natural hearts,” (36) and he says, with the same emphasis, that the “Pair” (86) with their child, “were as a proverb” (94) in the vale. At the same time, however, the narrator does call attention to the use of language, as if he were conscious of the latent memorializing value involved. When describing the “subterraneous music” of the south wind, at one point, he stops somewhat unexpectedly to give Michael’s exact words: “he to himself would say, ‘The winds are now devising work for me!’”(51, 54-55) and later he makes a point to distinguish his, the narrator’s, own expression—Michael’s beginning “To deem that he was old”—from the common “shepherd’s phrase,

"With one foot in the grave" (89-90). And, although the story's Biblical frame of reference is quite evident, the speaker parenthetically makes a point of Luke's naming , "(for so the Son was named)" (103). Within Michael's portion of the narrative, attention is also given to speech acts. His farewell proclamation and covenant with Luke emphasizes how, at the time of Luke's birth, "blessings from thy Father's tongue / Then fell upon thee" (342-43). This is a line that Wordsworth himself had quoted in a Letter to Lamb as an instance of imaginative interpolation in the poem.[77] Subsequently, Michael proceeds to pronounce another blessing and to "pray" (409) that Luke will be faithful.

Because of both the speaker's self-consciousness toward his narration and the poem's Biblical frame of reference, the speech acts of blessing, praying and naming take on a symbolic weight in "Michael" that they would not otherwise have. A final and striking example of their importance as images can be seen in regard to the cottage named "THE EVENING STAR," already mentioned and "THE CLIPPING TREE." Wordsworth introduces the latter as part of Michael's daily interaction with nature, and he calls attention to it in the text:

> the large old oak, that near his door
> Stood single, and from matchless depth of shade,
> Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
> Thence in our rustic dialect was called
> THE CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears (165-69)

Aside from denoting the origin and duration of the name, the poet includes a note explaining the use of "clipping" to mean "shearing" in northern England. Even more emphatic in objectifying the natural origin of metaphoric phrases in this way is the cottage named "THE EVENING STAR." Before he gives the name, the narrator explains how the house of Michael and his wife, because of the old lamp which itself has evolved into a "public symbol" (130) of the regular life they lived, came to be called, by "old and young. . . THE EVENING STAR"(139). Thus, once again, we see the associative process at work, aided, as before, with the visual emphasis of capitalization. And when the "Cottage which was named THE EVENING STAR" turns up again in the last stanza (476)

[77] *Early Years*, 316.

along with "the unfinished Sheep-fold" and "the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll, " (481-82), it becomes symbolic of the meaning of Michael's life in nature.

Wordworth's method in "Michael," then, is to renounce verbal self-consciousness and sophistication through the persona and instead, to accentuate visual imagery. His strategic use of the name "Green-head Ghyll" with the accompanying details of the brook and the pile of stones at the beginning and end of the narration enables the name to achieve the status of symbol since the details come to represent eternal, enduring qualities of nature. At the same time the narrator's quietistic view of speech and his reverential demeanor toward blessing, praying and naming, endow these speech-acts with a particular emphasis. The effect is to render not only naming but, to some extent, language itself, symbolic and sacramental.

In point of view and style, *The Waggoner* is as different from "Michael" as anything Wordsworth wrote. Wordsworth had told Lord Lonsdale that the poem was written "con amore," and this is certainly reflected in the persona's playful demeanor and the mock-heroic character of the whole. The poem was classified under "Fancy" in 1845, perhaps because Wordsworth felt the subject itself was "slight,"[78] but it does treat with good-natured irony the latent dangers of fanciful projection.

Pseudo-pathos and the mock-heroic elements of *The Waggoner* are evident from the beginning with the narrator's apostrophe to "Confiding Glowworms" (7) and his use of exclamation and rhetorical questions: "Hush, there is some one on the stir!" (22); "Heaven shield him from mishap and snare! / But why so early with this prayer?" (46-7). The speaker proceeds thus to ask and answer his own questions throughout the narration. The effect he achieves by using local place names contributes to the epic flavor, much in the manner of Milton:

> And now the conqueror essays
> The long ascent of Dunmail-raise;
> And with his team is gentle here
> As when he clomb from Rydal Mere. (99-102)

[78] *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years Part II 1812-1820*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1970), 542.

It is soon clear, however, that Wordsworth intends more of a role for proper nouns and names than is related to tone. As early as the third stanza, describing journey terrain, he accentuates the names of "the DOVE and OLIVE-BOUGH" twice (53, 58), telling that they were associated with "greeting of good ale" (54) but that that this element of temptation is now relegated to history since

> where the DOVE and OLIVE-BOUGH
> Once hung, a Poet harbours now,
> A simple water-drinking Bard;
> Why need our Hero then (though frail
> His best resolves) be on his guard? (58-62)

Yet the association with danger remains a point of emphasis since the speaker recalls with the names, the sign of another inn, "the famous "SWAN" (88) which sign is both an "Object uncouth! and yet our boast / For it was painted by the Host" (89-90).

Significantly, as Benjamin continues through a second phase of his journey, conscious of having by-passed temptation associated with the DOVE and OLIVE-BOUGH, the landscape which before was described with such inherently suggestive names as "Dunmail-raise," "Rydale –heights," and "Rydal Mere," now takes on greater animation as the speaker mentions "Helm-crag" whose resemblance to two human figures caused one peak to be called the "ASTROLOGER" (171) and another "the ANCIENT WOMAN," (175) noted earlier in "To Joanna." Wordsworth provides a note on this detail, but even in the text itself the personified names are juxtaposed with the legends surrounding them:

> near that lurid light full well
> The ASTROLOGER sage Sidrophel,
> Where at his desk and book he sits,
> Puzzling aloft his curious wits;
> He whose domain is held in common
> With no one but the ANCIENT WOMAN,
> Cowering beside her rifted cell,
> As if intent on magic spell.[79]

Thus the poet objectifies Benjamin's increasing projection of animacy onto the landscape which in turn takes on a quality reminiscent of myth. Shortly below, the speaker will introduce King Dunmail's grave, which he elaborates:

[79] "Sidrophel" is the name of the quack astrologer in the second part of Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*, Canto III, 105ff. See Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*, ed. John Wilders (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 155. It is difficult to see the relevance of the connection to Wordsworth's poem.

That pile of stones
Heaped over brave King Dunmail's bones,
He who had once supreme command,
Last king of rocky Cumberland;
His bones, and all those of his Power,
Slain here in a disastrous hour! (209-14)

In this way proper names, like monuments in landscape, become repositories of suggestiveness and symbolizing power. Consequently, when Benjamin comes to the "CHERRY TREE" in Canto 2, it is a name signaling very present and active temptation. Different forms of noise and celebrating at the CHERRY TREE are described in detail and with exclamation while Wordsworth himself provides a note on the fact that it was "MERRY-NIGHT" (II, 30) in the village. Drinking and gaiety are so intense this night at the inn that Benjamin himself seems transformed, "A Caesar past the Rubicon!" (II, 81). And it is here that the climactic act of fanciful projection occurs when the sailor brings in his replica of Nelson's "Flag-ship at the Nile / The VANGUARD" (115-16) and proceeds to recreate the famed object and event in detail and with verve, in a virtual frenzy of naming:

masts, sails, yard
He names them all; and interlards
His speech with uncouth terms of art,
Accomplished in the showman's part. (123-26)

Benjamin, or course, becomes engrossed in the whole and calls for a double-measure to toast Nelson whose name is now the equivalent for him of "'England's pride and treasure / Her bulwark and her tower of strength!'" (147-48).

The action that follows in Canto 4 is anticipated. For the ensuing part of Benjamin's journey the landscape is animated as never before. The narrator himself gives notice of this change with new mock-heroic gusto as he apostrophizes all "heroes" and invokes further aid from the Muses (22-55). In Canto 4 we are given a plethora of new place names which themselves suggest the animation transferred to them by Benjamin in his present state: The Muse herself wanders down a hawthorn dell, "With murmuring Greta for her guide" (17) and there "doth she ken the awful form / Of Raven-crag . . . and Ghimmer-crag, his tall twin brother" (19-21). We also hear of "Blencathara's rugged feet" where Sir Lancelot gave refuge to the young Clifford (46) and of "Castrigg's naked steep" (61).

In spite of the obstacles surmounted by the journey, his master resents the wound earlier given to the mastiff by the ass, and hence the speaker must announce, in the end, that

> Benjamin the good
> The patient, and the tender-hearted,
> Was from his team and wagon parted. (182-84).

Yet Wordsworth is purposeful in maintaining the irony developed in the poem thus far when he includes a stanza in which the persona-narrator can protest his constancy of purpose with the story, his view that beneath the trappings of the imperfect vehicle of the poem is his true desire to memorialize Benjamin and his "Machine" (217), as well as his satisfaction at being able to do so:

> Accept, O Friend, for praise or blame,
> The gift of this adventurous song;
> A record which I dared to frame,
> Though timid scruples checked me long;
> They checked me –and I left the theme
> Untouched;--in spite of many a gleam
> Of fancy which thereon was shed
> Like pleasant sunbeams shifting still
> Upon the side of a distant hill;
> But Nature might not be gainsaid;
> For what I have and what I miss
> I sing of these—it makes my bliss! (197-208).

Similarly, the irony that underlies the speaker's relationship to the mock-heroic framework of the poem is intended as a key emphasis. Also we have seen the consistent role of proper names in objectifying the fanciful projection of mood onto landscape phenomena through the narrative. Since the handling of names in *The Waggoner* is largely also a feature of the mock-elevated mode, Wordsworth can be understood to focus a significant part of the irony on the potential of simple names to accumulate more power and suggestiveness than raw empirical fact alone can warrant. Hence the CHERRY TREE by its ordonnance in the narration relative to the earlier DOVE and OLIVE-BOUGH becomes a central site of temptation for Benjamin at the high point of feasting, Benjamin becomes a "A Caesar past the Rubicon," and the model ship becomes Nelson's VANGUARD while Nelson himself becomes "England's pride and treasure." An finally, although Wordsworth's irony toward names in *The Waggoner* is more humorous than philosophical, it does point, in the end, to his somewhat painful recognition in *The Prelude*, VII, O, wond'rous power of words, by simple faith / Licensed to take the meaning that we

love! (119-20).

A sense of irony regarding language is probably more conscious in *Peter Bell* than in any other of Wordsworth's narratives, outside of the more philosophical sections of *The Prelude* and *The Excursion.* For one thing, Wordsworth's setting up of a more specified narrative framework than previously and his use of a garrulous persona, add complexity and suggestiveness to point of view. The elements of fantasy and romance contained in the Prologue's exchange between the poet and the "little Boat" distinguish *Peter Bell* from the so called "rustic" poems. Their effect, however, is to lend a slightly moral tone to the "promised Tale" (190) that ensues in the first part. At the same time, while it was possible to lose sight of the narrator in "The Idiot Boy" or even in "Michael," the speaker in *Peter Bell* imprints his personality on the poem with anecdotes and overt emotion in the form of questions and exclamations that cannot be ignored. The result is that, even more than in *The Waggoner,* we feel at all times an interested skepticism regarding the relationship between the language and rhetoric of the narration and the events behind it. Our purpose here, however, is to focus on those resources in the poem by which Wordsworth objectifies an interest in the irony associated with names and with language in general.

There are two different levels at which language as a motif emerges in the poem. The first pertains to the character of Peter Bell himself. Wordsworth includes as an epigraph to the poem a composite line from *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar* alluding to the irony of names: "What's in a Name? Brutus will start a Spirit as soon as Caesar!" As the narrative itself develops, though, we see increasingly that Peter Bell exhibits just the kind of skeptical indifference to names that the epigraph implies. We must keep in mind that Cassius, the opportunist, is the source for the second Shakespearean line. In any case, we learn that Peter has no inborn reverence for natural phenomena—to him they are only names:

> A primrose by a river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more. (248-50)

Nor can we expect from Peter the usual signs of human empathy as realized on the level of language. Upon meeting with the gaunt ass, he threatens to fling its carcass "like a log," which threat he confirms with "An impious oath" (459-61). Also at the heart of Peter's waywardness, we eventually learn, is a broken vow. He deserted his betrothed who, as a memorial to her sorrow, named her still unborn child

"Benoni," the child of sorrow," a name borrowed from scripture:

> For he, with tongue not used to falter,
> Had pledged his troth before the altar
> To love her as his wedded wife. (903-05)

To vows as symbols or memorials of action, Peter has preferred "The language of . . . drunken joys" (877). Thus it is probably no accident that the fear that eventually leads Peter to conversion is evoked, first, by the ass' "long and clamorous bray" (465) then by an "unintelligible cry," (691) "a burst of doleful sound"(611) which he cannot interpret but which the ass pursues against his will. These unstructured sounds in turn foreshadow echoes in the rocks, murmurs, and eventually the unsettling words "uttered with a scream, / 'My father!'" 1004-05) that represent the climax of Peter's painful call to conversion when his betrothed and daughter appear in Part III. That Peter Bell, in his indifference toward language and human relationships, should be confronted with wild and painful cries, is not unexpected. Through the narrator's comments, however, Wordsworth does show an interest in the potential and fearful power of language as a passage to the deeper mystery of things. As a foreshadowing to Peter's own call to reformation, the narrator tells an episode about one "gentle Soul" who, more used to trafficking with the written words than Peter, was bending one night over a "pious book" (742). Suddenly, "blackness overspread / The snow-white page on which he read," (743-44). When he turned around and then looked back at the book, he found that the light from the candle had "formed itself upon the paper / Into large letters –bright and plain (750);

> And on the page, more black than coal,
> Appeared, set forth in strange array,
> A *word*—which to his dying day
> Perplexed the good man's gentle soul. (752-55)

The recognition which, in the form of a "ghostly word," (756) thus "brought full many a sin to light," (759) haunted the poor wight much as the wedding guest was haunted by the ancient mariner's tale. The point, though, is that Wordsworth betrays a potentially metaphysical fascination with "the mystery of words" in their visually abstract appearance in print, an interest that appears in *The Prelude* as well.[80]

Ultimately the narrator's own self-consciousness regarding the poem, revealed in numerous asides, apologies and anecdotes, provides an explanation and thematic focus for the interest in

[80] See especially Book VII, 638ff. and XII, 238ff.

language that emerges throughout. And behind this emphasis we continue to see Wordsworth concerned with the memorializing function of language, whether in the form of vows and promises, or names. The versatility with which, in *Peter Bell* particularly, he objectifies this concern, foreshadows what we see in *The Prelude* in a more philosophical context. .

III.

The discussion up to this point has been centered on the thematic implication of naming in poems that, including the "Naming of Places" group, are basically narrative in structure. We have seen how Wordsworth uses names to add empirical solidity and vividness to the diction but also how, in some cases, the motif of naming and the memorializing power of names becomes part of a larger theme in poems like "Michael" or *The Waggoner*. His underlying sense of both the irony and "mystery" of language itself leads him to experiment with images of the printed word and books in the dramatic and more rhetorically self-conscious narrative of *Peter Bell.*

There is a group of lyric*s* from the 1807 edition in which naming is also an integral part of the rhetorical structure but which show the poet's concern with language from a slightly different point of view . The second Daisy poem in the "Fancy" category, actually entitled, "To the Same Flower," presents the most striking example of this focus. The speaker begins his apostrophe to "Daisy!" with the explanation that there is "little . . . to do or see . . . in the great world" (1-2). Once having addressed the daisy by name, however, he proceeds to offer a series of synonymous epithets for the flower, all of which he feels "suit" it best in their own way (23). In the first stanza he implies the humbleness of the flower, "Thou unassuming Common-place / Of Nature" (5-6) while in the third he becomes more consciously metaphoric: the daisy is alternately "a nun demure of lowly port" (17), a "spritely maiden, of Love's court" (18), a queen in crown of rubies drest," (21) " A starveling in a scanty vest" (22), and "A little Cyclops" (25). By the time he reaches the fifth stanza, the speaker seems conscious of the inadequacy of any one term, so he settles for a deliberate simile that is yet qualified:

> I see thee glittering from afar—
> And then thou art a pretty star;
> Not quite so fair as many are

In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star , with glittering crest . . . . (33-37)

After going through a series of metaphoric names, the poet discovers the generic and common name of "Flower" to be the most adequate:

Bright Flower! for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent creature. (41-44)

We can pose the question of whether or not Wordsworth means to make a philosophic point about the superiority of common, generic names, or whether he is just "playing with similes" as the speaker actually asserts at one point (10). In fact, the method of citing comparisons only to reject them reflects a topos seen in certain Renaissance love poems such as Shakespeare's sonnet XVIII, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? / Thou art more lovely and more temperate" [81] or Sonnet VI in Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, "Some lovers speak, when they their Muses entertain / Of hopes begot by fear. . . . " where the poet himself sees the most adequate vehicle in saying, with "trembling voice . . . that I do Stella love."[82] The point in these poems is ultimately that the poet's admiration for his beloved cannot be contained in any one expression or metaphor.

In Wordsworth's case, however, he tells us in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* that part of his intended "revolution" in poetic language was to sensitize readers to the value of simple, common names for things in contradistinction to the kind of periphrastic epithets found in Gray's sonnet on the death of Richard West. In the Daisy poem, moreover, there is clearly a primitivistic leaning in the preference for what is common, "homely" (6) and "unassuming" (5). The same emphasis appears in "To the Small Celandine." In subsequent stanzas he calls it "Little Flower" (15) and "Elf / Bold, and lavish of thyself" (17-18) yet, again he says it is "Like a careless Prodigal," (30) and "unassuming Spirit" (42). Finally, it becomes in the end, "Little, humble Celandine" (56).

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[81] *William Shakespeare*: *The Complete Works*, ed. Alfred Harbage (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 1476.
[82] *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. William A. Ringler, Jr. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 167-68,

Thus the emphasis is in revitalizing the common, everyday name by developing connotations through metaphoric terms, so that, as with the Daisy poem, the generic common name is allowed to memorialize all these qualities and more when it is represented in the poem's last lines. It is likely, in this connection, that Wordsworth meant to imply the value of using unadorned, common name images in *The White Doe of Rylstone*, of which he notes in a letter to Coleridge:

> The principal objects and agents such as the Banner and the Doe produced their influences and effects not by the power naturally inherent in them but such as they were endued with by the Imagination of the human minds on whom they operated.[83]

Thus he cites the ordonnance of such images, presented more or less at face value and without the kind of decorative attributes seen in the earlier *Descriptive Sketches*, as being more suggestive to the reader's own imagination.

I believe we mistake Wordsworth's intentions if we stay with the suggestion simply that Wordsworth's naming in the daisy poem and others like it is mere "toys of the Fancy," with metaphors "aware of their own illusory nature."[84] The poet's emphasis is equally on the value of the common, ordinary name, ironically discovered at the end, where intervening metaphors are part of the heuristic , discovering process. Moreover, we see the same pattern in other poems under "Fancy." In "The Redbreast Chasing the Butterfly," the speaker shows philosophic irony regarding names for "the bird . . . Man loves best . . . Our little English Robin" (1-3). He asks:

> Art thou the Peter of Norway Boors?
> Their Thomas in Finland
> And Russia far inland?
> The bird that by some name or other
> All men who know thee call their brother . . . . (6-10)

As the poem continues the bird is again called "Robin" (24) and finally, "O pious Bird!" (38). Even in the first of the poems on "Love Lies Bleeding," first published in 1842, the mythological story behind the

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[83] *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years Part II 1812-1820*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 542.
[84] Frances Ferguson, *Wordsworth: Language as Counterspirit*, cited above.

name is traced, but the speaker simply addresses a "down-cast Flower" in the last lines. In the second "Love Lies Bleeding," a distinction is made between the "undeparting Flower," itself, the metaphor, "the dejected Lingerer," and the memorial name "*Love Lies Bleeding*"(23-27).

It has been suggested by at least one critic that Wordsworth's playful demeanor toward names in the Fancy poems as well as certain of the Imagination poems constitutes an avoidance of direct articulation or at least a resignation to its inadequacy. Prof. Ferguson regards "There was a Boy" as just such an effort to "obviate" articulation in favor of recreating the boy's communication with nature impressionistically, with echo-like use of repetition, culminating with the epitaphic last lines, "This boy was taken from his mates, and died . . . I have stood / Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies"(26-34).[85] Whether the gap between the lead in statement and the apostrophe, "There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs / And islands of Winander!" (1-2) is an obviation of speech or a preference for common generic name of "Boy" is academic. The poem emphasizes the boy's re-assimilation with nature, and yet the final image itself is of a grave , presumably with a headstone and a name. [86]

In the second poem classed under "Imagination," "To the Cuckoo," Wordsworth approaches names in a manner reminiscent of the Daisy poem to the extent that he offers alternative appellations for the bird: "O BLITHE New-comer . . . O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird / Or but a wandering Voice?" (1-4) and yet again, it is a "darling of the Spring!" but yet "No bird, but an invisible thing / A voice, a Mystery" (13-16). Frederick Garber suggest that the synechdochial "Voice" image represents for Wordsworth, "the final point to which an object can be purified and still retain a tie to the sensuous reality of things."[87] Thus we might see Wordsworth as using a name that is less than a name only in the sense that it is more general, in order to get closer to the simple essence of things, in this case, the cuckoo. Significantly, though, the speaker, with all of his self-corrections, leaves even this metaphor behind when, in the last stanza, he addresses the cuckoo with its generic name, "O blessed Bird!" (29).

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[85] Ferguson, 167-72.
[86] Wordsworth would eventually incorporate the body of this poem in Book V of *The Prelude*, ll. 364-97.
[87] Frederick Garber, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Encounter* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 54.

Yet another instance of this form of naming under the heading of Imagination is seen in one of the Lucy poems, "She was a Phantom of Delight." Frank McConnell points to the rhetorical structure of this poem as being based on "permutations" of three different terms or designations. In stanza one, "Phantom of delight"; in two, "A Spirit yet a Woman too!" and in three, "A Being breathing thoughtful breath."[88] From this point of view, some of the other metaphoric names brought in, "A dancing Shape, an Image gay,"(9) "a countenance," (15) and "A Creature," (17) are attributes rather than separate designations themselves. One detail not considered by McConnell but pertinent to our discussion of naming, is that Wordsworth does finally adopt the generic names, "Woman" and "Spirit," introduced in stanza two, as—at least when qualifying each other—the most adequate memorials to the variety and mystery comprehended by his subject. Thus, in the concluding lines, we have

> A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort, and command;
> And yet a Spirit still, and bright
> With something of angelic light. (27-30)

Again, the more generic and common of the appellations, though seemingly trite at first, is favored as less restrictive to meaning and more accessible to the reader's imaginative participation.

The kind of naming exhibited in poems from the categories of both Fancy and Imagination thus shows Wordsworth using language as an investigative tool in the effort to approximate his object. A certain degree of philosophic irony informs his process of rejecting different metaphors to reside more or less with the common name as an image; he can both access the connotations of the metaphor even as he claims to discard it. In spite of the variegation and irony which derive from his imagery in this manner, we can yet see Wordsworth striving to enhance the impact of what for him was an important element of true poetic language: the common name.

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[88] Frank D. McConnell, *The Confessional Imagination: A Reading of Wordsworth's "Prelude*," (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 180.

Chapter III

Naming in *The Prelude*: the Rhetorical Style

If we consider naming in *The Prelude* simply as a rhetorical and stylistic feature by itself, we are involved almost immediately in areas of implication beyond what is seen in the shorter poems. This complexity results mainly from the connection between naming and both the epic and epistolary-confessional modes encompassed by *The Prelude.*

Not surprisingly, naming in the form of actual person and place names is a central feature of both the 1805 and 1850 versions of the poem. Book VIII does contain one instance of Wordsworth's eliminating a list of local names after 1805,[89] but the general frequency and impact of proper names for both texts are the same. [90] The descriptive lists for Cambridge in Book III, for London in VII and Paris in IX, as well as more scattered series of references to friends, authors, and specific literary works throughout the poem, can be identified with the catalogues and allusions of conventional epic style, including that of Milton particularly.[91] This observation, along with the fact demonstrated by Bowman Wiley, that use of proper nouns in *The Prelude* differs markedly from Wordsworth's earlier practice in *Descriptive Sketches*, [92] suggests that this form of naming is not an arbitrary or stock ornament but a conscious gesture on the poet's part.

Critics have gone far to elucidate the epic heritage and style of *The Prelude* as can be seen in the studies of Lindenberger, Wilkie, Kroeber and Potts, to name just a few. [93] Epic style is commonly

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[89] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind*, ed. Ernest deSelincourt, rev. Helen hire Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), Book VIII, 1805, ll. 221ff. All subsequent references to the text of *The Prelude* are to this edition.

[90] Jonathan Grandine, *The Problem of Shape in "The Prelude": the Conflict of Public and Private Speech* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 28.

[91] Ernest DeSelincourt, Introd. to *The Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind, by William Wordsworth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926), xxvii, 544*n*.

[92] Bowman Wiley, The Clear Synthesis: A Study of Wordsworth's Stylistic Development as a Descriptive Poet from 1793-1808, Salzburg Studies in English Literature under the direction of Prof. Erwin A. Stürzl, No. 16 (1974), 147.

[93] Cf. Karl Kroeber, *Romantic Narrative Art* (Madison:University of Wisconsin Press, 1960); Herbert Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth's 'Prelude'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); Abbie Findlay Potts, *Wordsworth's*

However, there is a tendency, when one focuses on a single rhetorical feature such as name lists, to assume the influence of specific authors or works on this basis alone. Potts' study exemplifies such a tendency when she finds Wordsworth deriving his lists generally from Thomson's *Seasons* while she notes specific parallels to catalogues in *The Pilgrim's Progress*.[94] More likely, since this feature is generally characteristic of the epic mode, Wordsworth's employment of catalogues is a conscious effort to emulate that mode. It is true that, as Brian Wilkie points out, we find no single passage as traditional as Milton's catalogue of devils in *Paradise Lost*,[95] Homer's catalogue of warriors in *The Iliad,* Book II, or the list of British rivers in *The Faerie Queene* (IV, xi). Still, the general tie with precedent and its latent symbolic value is the point to be emphasized. At the same time, we might defend Wordsworth, at least partially, from the claim by R. D. Havens, that his chief interest in proper and, specifically place names, was related to "their imaginative suggestiveness and sonorous pomp."[96] We must also consider Wordsworth's comments on the danger of using language for its allusive value alone: he sees Gray as a bird with borrowed feathers, "filching a phrase now from one author, now from another."[97] In *The Prelude* also he points to the suggestive potential of words but notes as well the excesses of youthful poets in choosing phrases "for delight / For pomp and love," a practice of which he had been guilty earlier but which he later rejected. [98] Finally, when Wordsworth does cite exotic place names from *Paradise Lost* on two separate occasions in *The Prelude*, it is in a context of irony. Thus he notes the naivety with which he first dreamt of London from afar:

> There was a time when whatsoe'er is feigned
> Of airy palaces, and gardens built
> By Genii of romance; or hath in grave
> Authentic history been set forth of Rome,
> Alcairo, Babylon, or Persepolis;

"*Prelude": A Study of its Literary Form* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1953), and Brian Wilkie, *Romantic Poets and Epic Tradition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965).

[94] Potts, 101, 221, 237-8.

[95] Wilkie, 97.

[96] R. D. Havens, *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922), 192.

[97] *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years Part II 1812-1820*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 301.

[98] Book V, ll. 557-8.

Or given upon report by pilgrim friars,
Or golden cities ten months' journey deep
Among Tartarian wilds—fell short, far short,
Of what my fond simplicity believed
And thought of London . . . . (VII, 77-86)

And in Book VIII, following his painful recognition of appearances versus reality in London, the poet compares classic examples of beauty and grandeur unfavorably to his own native landscape:

tract more exquisitely fair
Than that famed paradise of ten thousand trees,
Or Gehol's matchless gardens for delight
Of the Tartarian dynasty composed. (75-78)

In the first examples above, the names "Alcairo" and "Babylon" allude to *Paradise Lost*, Book I where these places are offered as an unworthy parallel to the splendor of Hell's royal abode:

Not Babylon,
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
Equaled in all their glories . . . (717-19).[99]

In the second example with the names "Gehol" and "Tartarian," we find a general imitation of the Miltonic mode involving traditional names as negative comparisons such as the description of Eden in *Paradise Lost*, IV, 268-75:

Not that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flow'rs
Herself a fairer flow'r, by gloomy Dis
Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world; nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne by Orontes, and th'inspired
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
Of Eden strive . . . .

The control and purposefulness that can be seen to underlie Wordsworth's use of names and lists of names in *The Prelude* applies also to naming in the form of a more stylized rhetorical feature—the

[99] *The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. Douglas Bush (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 229. All subsequent references to *Paradise Lost* are to this edition.

apostrophe. Apostrophe constitutes some of the more emphatic examples of name bestowal within the text of the poem. At the same time, it represents that mode of language traditionally identified as "sublime stye," "heroic stye," or, more importantly, "epic style" in conjunction with such other devices as interrogatio (rhetorical question), exclamatio, epithets and similes. Apostrophe also occurs freely and frequently in the elevated mode of so-called preromantic reflective poems including Thomson's *Seasons,* Young's *Night Thoughts*, Akenside's, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, and others.

Apostrophe in *The Prelude* is more purposeful, however. When examined as a gesture of naming in that poem, the same tendency noted by Roger Murray in the Ballads is seen:[100] the device takes on a self- conscious and symbolic potential that borders more on the realm of theme than style, in that the naming becomes an assertive, ritualistic action. In this connection, Paul D. Sheats notes that Wordsworth "delights in the sudden shift and bestowal of attention imiplied by the apostrophe," which "singles out" from the poem, individuals, especially Coleridge, as well as selected "creatures."[101]

Herbert Lindenberger sees the value of apostrophe and other features of formal rhetoric in *The Prelude* from a slightly different perspective. He notes specifically how Wordsworth's use of the figure shows awareness of the propriety, the "dignity" associated with it in traditional contexts, without, however, compromising his own present thematic purposes. Examples cited by Lindenberger are the addresses to Coleridge and to Anne Tyson in Book IV.[102] We thus see Wordsworth using apostrophe ritualistically, exploiting rather than being limited by the consciousness of its role in literary precedent. As this discussion will show, proper nouns, lists, and other forms of naming to be examined, are intentional in *The Prelude* and have a function that transcends rhetoric in the usual sense.

We will turn at this point from further discussion of Wordsworth's use of traditional epic style in the poem to focus on those particular features encompassed by the epistolary and confessional mode of *The Prelude*. We will see that the presence of a persona/mask, a feature appearing in the earlier

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[100] Roger N. Murray, *Wordsworth's Style: Figures and Themes in the "Lyrical Ballads" of 1800* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 45-57.
[101] Paul D. Sheats, *The Making of Wordsworth's Poetry, 1785-1798 (*Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 10.
[102] Lindenberger, 100.

narratives from "The Idiot Boy" to *Peter Bell*, lends weight and emphasis to naming in *The Prelude* with its self-conscious remarks about the poet's relationship to his medium of language generally.

Beyond its epic heritage and style, then, an equally important dimension to the poem is variously referred to as the confessional element (McConnell),[103] the autobiographical element (Onorato),[104] or, for purposes of form, the epistolary mode (Grandine)[105] in *The Prelude.* Each term refers to that discursive facet of the poem whereby the speaker explains, excuses, questions, or doubts his behavior and outlook in the deliberative style of courtroom rhetoric. The argumentativeness and candor of this mode stand out as among the truly innovative features of the poem, and they are what renders it "experimental" in spite of the many parallels and allusions to literary tradition.

It is true that some have suggested that even this element of the poem is derivative. A. F. Potts points to the habit of personal address seen in Pope's verse epistles as a source,[106] while Geoffrey Hartman compares Wordsworth's conversational style in *The Excursion* to Milton's later style and also cites Akenside's note on the Horatian mode of his own *Pleasures of the Imagination* as a precedent for Wordsworth.[107] For our purposes, though, it is more important to recognize two things. First, a certain degree of authorial intrusion, often expressing modesty about the work at hand, characterizes epic style; this feature can be seen in Milton and in the Miltonic mode in such writers as Thomson and Akenside. But, secondly, the manifestation of the authorial voice by means of self-questioning, apologies, and the like is markedly more consistent and emphatic in Wordsworth's *Prelude*, as examples below will illustrate. In Wordsworth, this aspect of the narrative voice takes on a life of its own and draws attention in its own right.

We have mentioned authorial concession of doubt regarding the undertaking at hand as a conventional device in the elevated style, not unrelated to those invocations to the Muse for aid in

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[103] Frank D. McConnell, *The Confessional Imagination: A Reading of Wordsworth's "Prelude"* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).
[104] Richard J. Onorato, *The Character of the Poet: Wordsworth in "The Prelude."* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 1-5.
[105] Grandine, 28.
[106] Potts, 54-55.
[107] Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 403*n*.

pure epic. An example from *Paradise Lost* shows Adam in conversation with Raphael as he prefaces his own narrative of Edenic life with the claim, "For man to tell how human life began / Is hard; for who himself beginning knew? (VIII, 250-52). In Book VI Raphael as narrator employs the topos of doubt to suggest that the conflict of Abdiel and Gabriel at war with Satan cannot be described by men:

> They ended parle, and both addressed for fight
> Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue
> Of angels, can relate, or to what things
> Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift
> Human imagination to such highth
> Of godlike power? (296-307).

Expressions of doubt can also take the more subtle form of simple statements interspersed in the text, such as Satan's "Long were to tell / What I have done" in X, 469-70.

In a similar way we occasionally encounter dubitatio in Thomson, though more rarely and usually in a more stylized form: "O Sun! . . . may I sing thee?" (94-96).[108] In Akenside's *The Pleasures of Imagination* we find an equally classic example in the address to Beauty, "Brightest progeny of Heaven! / How shall I trace thy features?" (280-81).[109] Akenside also shows an interest in the topos of doubt applied to language specifically: "What need words / To paint its power?" (244-45). It is an interest that Herbert Rauter sees as characteristic of the general concern among preromantic writers with language as a philosophical problem.[110]

Wordsworth's use of the figure of doubt in *The Prelude* is at least equally consistent with that of *Paradise Lost*, and the fact that *The Prelude* is a single narrative reflecting the viewpoint of one speaker rather than several as in Milton's poem, renders the impact of the acknowledged doubt that much more emphatic. It leads critics like Grandine to talk about the "evidences of anxious indecision" that Wordsworth never expunged from the text.[111] Onorato refers to the self-corrections and self-

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[108] James Thomson, *The Seasons*, "Summer," in *Thomson's "Seasons,"* ed. Otto Zippel (1908; rpt.: Folcroft Library Editions, 1970).
[109] Mark Akenside, *The Pleasures of Imagination*, Bk, I, in Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose, ed. Louis Bredvold et. al. (New York: The Ronald Press, 1939), 1031.
[110] Herber Rauter, *Die Sprachauffassung der englischen Vorromanik in ihrer Bedeutung für die Literaturkritik and DIchtungstheorie der Zeit,* Frankfurter Beiträge zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik (Berlin: Verlag Gehlen, 1970), 117.

chidings as indicating what might almost be "symptomatic" of the "derangement" Wordsworth himself cited whereby writing was rendered extremely painful to him.[112] The point, however, is that Wordsworth's use of doubt is more consistent and carries a greater burden with regard to theme than in the other poets mentioned.

Wordsworth's expressions of doubt in *The Prelude* take a variety of forms. Often cited for its prosaic starkness is the statement following his words of gratitude for his own less rigid childhood education in Book V: "My drift I fear / Is scarcely obvious" (294-95). Even more startling is the doubt, combined with the rhetorical figure of "breaking off" (aposiopesis) in explaining the delayed impact of his London experience in Book VIII, "alas, I feel / That I am trifling" (555-56). In Book II he notes the challenge of the subject before him: "'Twere long to tell . . . " (353) and

> Yet is a path
> More difficult before me; and I fear
> That in its broken windings we shall need
> The chamois sinews, and the eagle's wing. (272-75)

Elsewhere in Wordsworth's landscape experience in Book I, he asks, "What need of many words?"(105). Doubt about language is perhaps most eloquent following the first spot of time experience of Book XII:

> It was , in truth,
> An ordinary sight; but I should need
> Colours and words that are unknown to man,
> To paint the visionary dreariness . . . . (253-56).

In a similar vein is the elegiac assertion from the same book,

> I would give,
> While yet we may, as far as words can give,
> Substance and life to what I feel, enshrining,
> Such is my hope, the spirit of the Past
> For future restoration. (282-86)

Here the qualifying clauses in line 283 constitute a subtler version of the figure of doubt.

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[111] Grandine, 5.
[112] Onorato, 12.

If as Rauter claims, there was renewed interest in the so-called "topos of inexpressibility" in preromantic poetry, [113] the implications of this feature as it occurs in *The Prelude* reach even further. Not only does Wordsworth use language imagistically as a Platonic metaphor to describe the imaginative experience in general, but he also addresses "words" and "language" directly as a theme in the course of tracing his development as a poet and artist.[114] Consequently, his use of the topos of doubt on the subject of language anticipates the discussion of his own orientation to language and its success or failure as a medium. The subject becomes a definite focus of Books V and VI.

The topos of "doubt" is only one feature of *The Prelude's* rhetorical texture. It does relate closely to and overlaps, in some instances, other figures of speech within the poem's deliberative style, consisting of what is sometimes called the "rhetoric of ethos."[115] An example is the statement cited above from Book V, "My drift I fear / Is scarcely obvious . . . ." While this claim by itself constitutes an expression of doubt about the poet's own ability to communicate in the present instance, it also represents the subtle rhetorical strategy of anticipating the audience's objections, usually accompanied by an attempt to preclude the objection. Here the narrator, as if to placate the reader, includes another illustration of the same point, namely the benefits of a more unstructured education:

> My drift I fear
> Is scarcely obvious; but, that common sense
> May try this system by its fruits,
> Leave let me take to place before her sight
> A specimen pourtrayed with faithful hand. (V, 293-97)

What follows are the contrasting portraits of the child prodigy and the Boy of Winander. In another instance in Book IX, the poet foresees the unfavorable light in which his early aloofness to events in France might be viewed. Addressing his "Friend" directly, he calls such detachment "indifference . . . / Which may seem strange" and then explains, (diceologia) "but I was unprepared / With needful

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[113] Rauter, 117.
[114] David Perkins, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 97.
[115] Klaus Dockhorn, "Wordsworth und die rhetorische Tradition in England," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*, *Phil.-Hist. Kl.* (1944) 255-92.

knowledge" (91-93). What is probably Wordsworth's most elaborate use of the strategy of procatalepsis or anticipating objections, occurs in Book VII. Following his catalogue-survey of modes of life and "entertainments" in London, the poet prepares to treat political and pulpit oratory. But before he actually does so, he feels the need to apologize in advance for such a subject:

> The matter that detains us now may seem,
> To many, neither dignified enough
> Nor arduous, yet will not be scorned by them
> Who, looking inward, have observed the ties
> That bind the perishable hours of life
> Each to the other. . . . (458-63)

From the examples of the two devices cited thus far, the admitting of doubt and apologizing beforehand, we see a significant trend in the rhetorical texture of the poem. Expressions of authorial doubt, whether directed to language specifically or to the undertaking of the poem generally, foster an image or "character" of earnestness for the persona in relation to his communicative task. Thus, by means of dubitatio, the poet can project a character or "ethos" of humility that will dispose the reader or listener more favorably to his content. Also, by anticipating audience objections, the author is tacitly conceding some initial failure to communicate with optimum clarity. Thus while both dubitatio and anticipated objections function ultimately as devices of authorial control, their purpose being to dispose the reader favorably to the argument, they yet realize that end by tacit deprecation of the author-persona's own communicative skill. In the paragraphs below we will show how other figures characteristic of the poem's rhetoric contribute to the self-diminishing posture of the persona and how, finally, they heighten, by contrast, the impact of figures involving "naming" which, itself, assumes thematic significance in other sections of the poem.

Among the figures of speech associated with persuasive apologetics, the literal admission of one's own weakness or unworthiness, known as meiosis, is probably most emphatic; and instances of it in *The Prelude* stand out accordingly. The poet compares himself to Coleridge in the course of an eloquent apostrophe to his friend in Book II and sees himself as

less aptly skilled
Than many are to range the faculties
In scale and order, class the cabinet
Of their sensations, and in voluble phrase
Run through the history and birth of each
As of a single independent thing. (222-27).

Meiosis such as this occurs as part of an effort to render praise or flattery to the addressee by contrast. In Wordsworth's case, however, we know that concern with his own potential for growth as a thinker and a writer is intended as a theme and subject in its own right in the poem. Not surprisingly, then, a second meiosis relates to skill with language when the poet alludes to his confusion regarding events in France. He feels much can be explained by the concession that he was

An insignificant stranger and obscure,
And one, moreover, little graced with power
Of eloquence even in my native speech
And all unfit for tumult and intrigue . . . . (X, 148-51)

Beyond meiosis and dubitatio and more related to the anticipation of opposition as a means of showing lack of assurance regarding the expressive task, are the figures of correction (self-correction), anthypophora (debating with oneself), paralipsis (stating a point by claiming to avoid it), and the hypothetical proposition. Correctio or self-correction in particular is a device whereby the poet rejects a word or expression he originally used in favor of a more suitable one. As such it is clearly a vehicle for emphasis. However, since the inadequacy of language itself and the poet's own relative skill occur are thematic interests in *The Prelude*, Wordsworth's use of self-correction becomes something of a symbolic gesture. The figure occurs in Book X, for example, in a manner that conveys the confusion felt by the speaker when he mentions having supported France's victory over England at one point:

It was a grief, --
Grief call it not, 'twas anything but that,--
A conflict of sensations without a name . . . . (288-90)

Earlier in VI, he explains with some uneasiness the sense that in some phases of his college life, he was less applied to study than he likes to admit, even now. He denotes his "detachment" from academic

cares,

> This spurious virtue, rather let it bear
> A name it now deserves, this cowardice,
> Gave treacherous sanction to that over-love
> Of freedom . . . . (30-33).

The impression created through such examples is that the speaker-poet, with theoretical and thematic concern with the problem of language, is "discovering" its limitations and potential through the experience of the poem. His willingness to interrupt his own statements and redirect them in the course of the narrative functions, with other types of authorial intrusion, to reinforce the view that, on one hand, *The Prelude* is a poem about "the process of creating images,"[116] and that is both "describes" and "demonstrates" its subject, which is the imagination.[117]

The sense of dramatized process inherent in a figure such as self-correction is seen to an even greater extent in anthypophora or "debating with oneself." By means of this figure the narrator conducts his thinking aloud in the medium of the verse so that the process of his decision making becomes dramatized. As a device it occurs frequently in poetic drama such as Shakespeare's as well as in the epic mode of *Paradise Lost*. In *The Prelude*, however, where the burden of the narration is on a single speaker, this figure becomes even more integral as a vehicle for transition and development. For one thing, the actual sequence of questions followed by possible answers and qualifications that usually constitutes anthypophora, is less restricted spatially where the narration is accountable to a single voice. A classic instance of anthypophora is seen in *Paradise Lost* where Satan ruminates on his revolt and punishment as he approaches the prospect of Eden:

> O had this powerful destiny ordained
> Me some inferior angel, I had stood
> Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised
> Ambition. Yet why not? Some other Power
> As great might have aspired, and me though mean

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[116] Wiley, 127.
[117] Mark Reed, "The Speaker of *The Prelude*," *Bicentenary Wordsworth Studies in Memory of John Alban Finch*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 280.

Drawn to his part. But other powers as great
Fell not but stand unshaken . . . . (IV, 58-64).

After analyzing the past, Satan then rationalizes, in the famous lines:

O then at last relent: is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
With other promises and other vaunts
Than to submit . . . . (IV, 79-85).

The manner in which issues are posed, questioned, qualified, and resolved in fairly close succession here contrasts, largely, to Wordsworth's method in *The Prelude* in that, within that poem, larger blocks of narrative are available to accommodate these questionings. A brief example occurs in Book VI where the poet cites the enchanter, Indolence, from Thomson, to characterize his "collegiate life":

—far less intense
Than duty called for, or without regard
To duty*, might* have sprung up of itself
By change of accidents, or even, to speak
Without unkindness, in another place.
Yet why take refuge in that plea?—the fault,
This I repeat, was mine; mine be the blame. (183-89)

More characteristic of *The Prelude*, however, is an instance from Book XI where the narrator attempts to clarify the relationship of his idealism to the events actually occurring in France at that time:

I pursued what seemed
A more exalted nature; wished that Man
Should start out of his earthy worm-like state,
And spread abroad the wings of Liberty,
Lord of himself, in undisturbed delight—
A noble aspiration! *yet* I feel
(Sustained by worthier as by wiser thoughts)
The aspiration, nor shall ever cease
To feel it;—but return we to our course.
Enough, 'tis true—could such a plea excuse
Those aberrations—had the clamorous friends

> Of ancient Institutions said and done
> To bring disgrace upon their very names;
> Disgrace, of which, custom and written law,
> And sundry moral sentiments as props
> Or emanations of those institutes
> Too justly bore a part. A veil had been
> Uplifted; why deceive ourselves? in sooth,
> 'Twas even so . . . . (XI, 250-68)

This passage clearly lacks the immediacy of Milton's example where Satan is compelled, more or less formalistically, to take sides on the issue to enable progression of the narrative action. Wordsworth proceeds more slowly. Here he makes his initial statement about pursuing a "more exalted nature," and continues to build on it in succeeding lines, offering additional and alternative expressions in an appositional manner. And when he comes to the exclamation, "A noble aspiration!" the narrator creates the impression that he is discovering and simultaneously expressing his true feeling on the issue as a result of the exercise of verbalizing it for the reader. When he introduces the next verse paragraph with a concession about the damaged image of the Royalists, he proceeds to develop the "disgrace" for four lines, so that when he does complete the sentence in line 266, the speaker is more prepared to continue the same emphasis on the corruption of the old versus the progress of the new ("A veil had been / Uplifted; why deceive ourselves?") rather than make a qualifying statement. This is in spite of the fact that the initial concession in line 259, "Enough, 'tis true . . . had the clamorous friends / Of ancient Institutions said and done . . . " anticipates a qualifying rather than an elaborating statement. Once again, we see the narrator "feeling his way" into the argument and seeking, with oratorical strategies of concession and rhetorical question, to persuade us in the same direction.

It may not be going too far to suggest that the narration of *The Prelude* as a whole is one extended "anthypophora" since the implied presence of an interlocutor is so pronounced throughout. Critics like John McConnell have described *The Prelude* as, essentially, a poem to Coleridge.[118] The point for our discussion, though, is that the device of anthypophora is just one index

[118] McConnell, Chapter I.

to the fairly strong element of audience awareness in the narrative, an element that shows the speaker on his guard, as though in constant anticipation of the possibility of his own failure to communicate.

An additional figure that sometimes occurs as part of anthypophora and that further illustrates the defensively argumentative stance of Wordsworth's narrative is the hypothetical statement/question.. C. S. Lewis cites an emphatic instance of this figure in *Paradise Lost* to show the strong sense of authorial manipulation in the text of that poem, the "feeling," Lewis calls it, "that something highly concatenated is before you":[119]

> If thou beest he—but O how fall'n! how changed
> From him who in the happy realms of Light
> Cloth'd with transcendant brightness didst outshine
> Myriads though bright: If he whom mutual league,
> United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
> And hazard in the Glorious Enterprize
> Joyned with me once, now misery hath joined
> In equal ruin, into what Pit thou seest
> From what highth fall'n . . . . (I, 84-92).

The hypothetical clauses in lines 84 and 87 are clearly intended more for emphasis than serious induction, but the impact of such "manipulation," even on the level of syntax remains.

With the passage cited by Lewis in mind, we can examine the comparison with Wordsworth's practice in *The Prelude*. He concludes Book II with a hypothetical proposition when he comments on the sincerely with which he has reported transcendental "approximations" to nature in earlier lines:

> If this be error, and another faith
> Find easier access to the pious mind, 420
> Yet were I grossly destitute of all
> Those human sentiments that make this earth
> So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice
> To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye lakes
> And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
> That dwell among the hills where I was born.
> If in my youth I have been pure in heart,

[119] C. S. Lewis, "The Style of Secondary Epic, *A Preface to 'Paradise Lost'*"(London: Oxford University Press, 1942),reprinted in *Milton: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Louis L. Martz (Englewood Cliffs, Prenice-Hall, 1966), 44.

If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
With God and Nature communing, removed
From little enmities and low desires,
The gift is yours; if in these times of fear,
This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,
If 'mid indifference and apathy,
And wicked exultation when good men
On every side fall off, we know hot how,
To selfishness, disguised in gentle names
Of peace and quiet and domestic love,
Yet mingled not unwillingly with sneers
Of visionary minds; if, in this time
Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
Despair not of our nature, but retain
A more than Roman confidence, a faith
That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
The blessing of my life; the gift is yours,
Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis yours,
Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! (419-47)

Aside from Wordsworth's more intricate manner of interweaving seven successive conditional clauses here to achieve an oratorical crescendo by line 445, we see how he uses the hypotheses themselves to maintain a functional humility which simultaneously restrains his flight in the apostrophe and functions to heighten the impact of his articulating gratitude to "Ye winds and sounding cataracts" and "Nature" in the end. The narrator uses hypotheses as a qualifying device: the reader need not embrace the proclamations of the poem, but, should we be inclined to, we will also acknowledge Wordsworth's own pledges of constancy and integrity (ethos): "If in my youth, I have been pure in heart . . . if in this time of dereliction and dismay, I yet /Despair not of our nature . . . " (427-42).

Critics have noted the impact with which Wordsworth employs the hypothetical structure in the concluding lines of "Tintern Abbey."[120] Onorato, in particular, suggests that with this feature the speaker is rendered priest-like, as if leading his apostles to higher wisdom.[121] We can now see how

[120] Sheats, 239.

multiple occurrences of these conditional structures in *The Prelude* heighten our awareness of the persuasive facet of the narrative mask. An important example appears toward the close of Book I where the narrator declares his faith in the sympathy of Coleridge, the poem's addressee:

> Nor will it seem to thee, O Friend! so prompt
> In sympathy, that I have lengthened out
> With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale.
> Meanwhile, my hope has been, that I might fetch
> Invigorating thoughts from former years . . . .
> . . . Yet should these hopes
> Prove vain, and thus should neither I be taught
> To understand myself, nor thou to know
> With better knowledge how the heart was framed
> Of him thou lovest; need I dread from thee
> Harsh judgements, if the song be loth to quit
> Those recollected hours that have the charm
> Of visionary things, those lovely forms
> And sweet sensations that throw back our life,
> And almost make remotest infancy
> A visible scene, on which the sun is shining? (I, 617-35)

Here the lengthy conditional statement which concludes the passage ends, somewhat surprisingly, as a rhetorical question since in tone and structure it resembles more the discursive declarations found elsewhere in the poem. The effect, though, remains the same since the narrator is again covering himself, so to speak, by allowing for the failure of his own poem to communicate. He thus manages to enlist the support of at least part of the audience, in Coleridge, for either eventuality. Also, as with the previous example, the hypothetical format casts an aura of logic and control over the whole so that the audience never feels cajoled and is less likely to resist the point.

One final strategy that emerges in the self-conscious rhetoric of *The Prelude* is "paralepsis" whereby the speaker makes a point by claiming to omit it. With this figure, even more than with some others mentioned, we are dealing with a strategy typical of deliberative argument, where it is to the narrator's clear advantage to assert an "ethos" of stability and credibility. Wordsworth's narrator most

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[121] Onorato, 83.

often alludes to considerations of time and space, compositional symmetry, and, occasionally, just a sense of propriety in general, as reasons for breaking off the discussion. In a passage from Book XI the poet seems about to justify his earlier withdrawal of sympathy from Britain to France:

> To a strain
> More animated I might here give way,
> And tell, since juvenile errors are my theme,
> What in those days, through Britain, was performed
> To turn *all* judgments out of their right course;
> But this is passion over-near ourselves,
> Reality too close and too intense,
> And intermixed with something, in my mind,
> Of scorn and condemnation personal,
> That would profane the sanctity of verse. (XI, 52-61)[122]

Thus the speaker claims to forego minute elaboration of Britain's conduct and actually achieves greater emphasis through suggestion. Significantly, he manages at the same time to project the character of the thoughtful and discerning author who "controls" the choice and expression of the subject for the benefit of the audience. And in the lines that follow, he makes a point with what is allegedly a compromise statement but which is strong enough in its own right:

> Our Shepherds, this say merely, at that time
> Acted, or seemed at least to act, like men
> Thirsting to make the guardian crook of law
> A tool of murder . . . . (62-65)

Again, in book V, the speaker makes as if to terminate the narration of his gratitude to the poets. We note specifically how he alludes to the inadequacy of language itself, a common literary topos, in this connection:

> Yet wherefore speak?
> Why call upon a few weak words to say
> What was already written in the hearts

[122] Ford T. Swetnam, Jr. cites this passage as an example of Wordsworth's use of paralipsis in "The Satiric Voices of *The Prelude*," *Bicentenary Wordsworth Studies in Memory of John Alban Finch*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 100.

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Of all that breathe?—what in the path of all
Drops daily from the tongue of every child,
Wherever man is found? (V, 183-88)

In the verse paragraph that follows, he announces specifically,

That portion of my story I shall leave
There registered; whatever also of power
Or pleasure, sown or fostered thus, may be
Peculiar to myself, let that remain
Where still it works, though hidden from all search
Among the depths of time. (192-97)

Having made a point of his reticence of the subject, however, the speaker then adds,

Yet is it just
That here, in memory of all books which lay
Their sure foundations in the heart of man,
Whether by native prose, or numerous verse,
That in the name of all inspired souls,
From Homer the great Thunderer, from the voice
That roars along the bed of Jewish song . . . .
. . . from those loftiest notes
Down to the low and wren-like warblings made
For cottagers and spinners at the wheel . . . .
'Tis just that in behalf of these, the works,
And of the men that framed them, whether known,
Or sleeping nameless in their scattered graves,
That I should here assert their rights, attest
Their honours, and should, once for all, pronounce
Their benediction; speak of them as Powers
Forever to be hallowed; only less,
For what we are and what we may become,
Than Nature's self, which is the breath of God,
Or his pure Word by miracle revealed (V, 197-222)

By claiming to withhold expression of his own gratitude in lines 192-97, the speaker tacitly sets us up for an eloquent and ritual declaration of his acknowledged tie to all his poetic forebears. Particularly his manner of emphasizing the act of his expression, a device reminiscent of ancient poetry,[123] is

[123] Rauter, 198.

effective here: he will “assert,” “attest,” “pronounce,” and “speak” their influence. In these examples as elsewhere in *The Prelude*, paralipsis, the claim to omit expression of a specific point, tends to function in reverse and paves the way for a more conscious and powerful articulation of that point. The narrator, all the while, presents the image of one who is cautious and restrained in his use of language.

As this somewhat involved rhetorical discussion suggests, Wordsworth’s narrative voice in *The Prelude* has an overt and active role that necessarily influences the shape and direction of the poem’s thematic content. The manner in which the speaker intrudes to demonstrate his humility regarding language and his own abilities, while he yet anticipates his audience and attempts to reassure it, goes far beyond the simple narrative masks of such poems as “The Idiot Boy,” “Michael,” and *Peter Bell*. Sustained self-consciousness in the narrator provides the reader with a certain distance from the poem, causing us to be both more analytical of and sensitive to the actual language and imagery. In the ensuing discussion, we will show how Wordsworth’s use of names and the gesture of naming in *The Prelude* are both foregrounded and extended by the voice of the intrusive and self-conscious narrator we have described.

Chapter IV

Naming in *The Prelude*: The Imagery

The preceding discussion has emphasized how well developed and pervasive the voice of the narrator is in the text of *The Prelude*. Critics have reacted differently to this element of the poem. Jonathan Grandine claims that, "the direction of *The Prelude* as a gigantic verse letter to Coleridge . . . made possible . . . spontaneity and variety of speech" and concludes that by means of this format, Wordsworth was able to reconcile his desire for "private speech" and for a long Miltonic "public" poem.[124] Frank McConnell states that the "middle style of narration" is in "constant pressure against the more than heroic theme" and "is a source of tension throughout the poem."[125] Early in the previous chapter we suggested that the more explicit forms of naming in *The Prelude*, particularly apostrophes and lists and catalogues, are purposely associated with the epic, heroic mode rather than being merely natural expressions of the garrulous, apologetic narrator. We suggested also, in agreement with Herbert Lindenberger, that Wordsworth incorporates such devices in full awareness of, and even to take advantage of, their bond with literary tradition.[126] In the ensuing discussion we will show that Wordsworth's use of proper names and the gesture itself of naming transcends the realm of rhetoric and assumes thematic import of its own. We will see that the apologetic rhetoric of *The Prelude* enhances this effect in a manner similar to what is seen in the shorter narratives discussed in Chapter II.

Several points should be made with regard to this examination of naming in *The Prelude*. First, a straightforward tabulation of the word "name" itself, of proper nouns, or of words treated as proper names, the result of unanticipated capitalization of a noun with "the," is not indicated and may even be deceptive in this case. An obvious concern is that punctuation in the text was subject to editorial control to some extent, and controversy regarding specific words in upper case would be hard to

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[124] Jonathan R. Grandine, *The Problem of Shape in "The Prelude": The Conflict of Public and Private Speech* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968) 28-29.
[125] Frank D. McConnell, *The Confessional Imagination: A Reading of Wordsworth's "Prelude"* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974) 64.
[126] Herbert Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth's "Prelude"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 2, 5.

resolve. A more significant objection relates to Wordsworth's own language practice. As Josephine Miles and others have shown, Wordsworth was conscious throughout his poetry from the *Lyrical Ballads* on, of the potency and desirability of using plain, generic words rather than more specific or stylized synonyms.[127] This preference has been cited earlier in comments on some of the bird and flower poems from the 1807 edition.[128] We can infer from those poems that Wordsworth would use common or generic names such as "daisy" or "flower" while intending them to have the impact of a proper name. Thus words that are not technically proper names can be employed in a manner that would yet cause them to have that significance. Finally, there is the question of literary allusion. Wordsworth is seen to articulate bonds with literary tradition by means of subtle phrase echoes from a variety of poets whose original context is not necessarily recreated in *The Prelude*, as W.J. B. Owen has shown. In many cases proper names are not involved in such borrowings whose main function is to lend a "sense of authority" without muting the poet's own voice.[129]

Our study of naming in *The Prelude* will consider both the thematic and stylistic texture of the 1850 version of the poem to demonstrate that the conscious use of proper names and the gesture itself of naming are intimately related to the poet's socialization and maturation, his transition from the "private" to the "public" world as an artist.[130] We will observe that the speaker of *The Prelude* exhibits what is largely a cautious, restrained demeanor toward names prior to Book VII of the poem. It is a demeanor we may designate as "quietistic" in conformity with the passive, meditative habit of mind that often prevails in these sections of the poem. Book VII itself contains a climactic confrontation between the poet and the "great world" which, itself, is objectified by means of proper names as a threatening "otherness" or *nicht sich* for his artistic consciousness. Following the confrontation, the poet discovers the repository of comfort and perspective available to him in the artistic achievements of the past, a recognition triumphantly celebrated through use of names and allusions in Book VIII.

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[127] Josephine Miles, *Wordsworth and the Vocabulary of Emotion* (1942; rpt. New York: Octagon, 1965), 27-29; Robert Holkeboer and Nadean Bishop, "Wordsworth on Words," *The Wordsworth Circle* 6 (1975), 309.
[128] Cf. Chapter II, page?
[129] W. J. B. Owen, "Literary Echoes in *The Prelude*," *The Wordsworth Circle,* 3 (1972), 14.
[130] This terminology is from Grandine's study, previously cited.

Subsequently, in the books dealing with the French Revolution, the poet can be seen to exhibit a new sophistication regarding names and language that leads him to view the conflicts of those times with from a new perspective and leads him, in the end, toward a recovered equanimity .

I.

Book VII has been cited as the focal and climactic section of *The Prelude* with respect to the poet's orientation to names. Without going into fullest detail, we can readily establish that Book VII contains an extended series of lists and catalogues in a manner reminiscent of both epic convention and loco-descriptive technique. Wordsworth begins by explaining that his own conception of what London must be like exceeded what he found it in experience to be. He says that even what history records about the distant and romantic places of "Rome," "Alcairo," "Persepolis," or "golden cities" in "Tartarian wilds" (80-84) did not equal the magic he associated with London—a London comprised "Of mitred Prelates, Lords in ermine clad / The King, and the King's Palace and . . . the renowned Lord Mayor" (108-10). It was by a London characterized by

> The River proudly bridged: the dizzy top
> And Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's; the tombs
> Of Westminster; the Giants of Guildhall;
> Bedlam, and those carved maniacs at the gates,
> Perpetually recumbent Statues—man,
> And horse under him—in guilded pomp
> Adorning flowery gardens, 'mid vast squares;
> The Monument, and that Chamber of the Tower
> Where England's sovereigns sit in long array,
> Their steeds bestriding—every mimic shape
> Cased in the gleaming mail the monarch wore,
> Whether for gorgeous tournament addressed,
> Or life or death upon the battle-field. (129-41)

The poet has specific places and features in mind in his idealized concept of London, as the names in the passage indicate. In subsequent lines he conveys what he actually found there with a series of mixed catalogues, or "congeries":

> Shop after shop, with symbols, blazoned names,
> And all the tradesman's honours overhead:
> Here, fronts of houses, like a title page,
> With letters huge inscribed from top to toe,
> There, allegoric shapes, female or male,
> Or physiognomies of real men,
> Land-warriors, kings, or admirals of the sea,
> Boyle, Shakespeare , Newton, or the attractive head
> Of some quack doctor . . . . (158-67)

This unpredictable variety of visual details mirrors the sense of confusion that overwhelms the poet's sensibility as he confronts the city for the first time. He proceeds at greater length to mention other prototypes and activities of the lower class:

> The begging scavenger, with hat in hand;
> The Italian, as he thrids his way with care,
> Steadying, far-seen, a frame of images
> Upon his head; with basket at his breast
> The Jew; the stately and slow-moving Turk,
> With freight of slippers piled beneath his arm! (213-18)

He becomes more succinct when he lists

> The Swede, the Russian; from the genial south,
> The Frenchman and the Spaniard; from remote
> America, the Hunter-Indian; Moors,
> Malays, Lascars, the Tartar, the Chinese,
> And Negro Ladies in white muslin gowns. (224-28)

Wordsworth's intent here is not simply to add color and specificity to the poem's texture by listing proper names in such a manner: he means to objectify the endless variety of phenomena alien to the experience of the young poet who, until now, has been sheltered in rural life, nature and, to a lesser extent, the academic world. Interestingly, within this list of encounters, the poet includes various exhibitions and the theater. In one miniature architectural vignette, the poet suggests he even encountered Rome:

> St. Peter's Church; or . . .
> In microscopic vision, Rome herself;

> Or, haply, some choice rural haunt,—the Falls
> Of Tivoli; and, high upon that steep,
> The Sibyl's mouldering Temple . . . . (252-56)

When he includes the theater, he cites "Half-rural Sadler's Wells" (267) along with a more amateur production of "Jack the Giant-killer" (280). One drama proves to have more emotional sway for him than he would have expected since it was the story of "The Maid of Buttermere" (297) originating in his home district. The speaker is moved by these associations to the extent that he must call the name back a second time with an apostrophe:

> —thy image rose again,
> Maiden of Buttermere! She lives in peace
> Upon the spot where she was born and reared;
> Without contamination doth she live
> In quietness, without anxiety. (319-23)

Her name and image bring with it associations quite in contrast to what he sees before him in the city.

The poet cannot terminate his catalogue of London experiences without dealing with a more public concern. He enters the realm of statesmanship and politics to treat one of the heroes of oratory, Burke, whose name Wordsworth added to the 1850 edition. Before announcing the name in an apostrophe, he says that the name was so famous in its day as to be

> a household term, like those,
> The Bedfords, Glosters, Salisburys, of old
> Whom the fifth Harry talks of . . . . (496-98)

Nor is the poet bashful in this tribute to the "Genius of Burke" about incorporating oratorical syntax and diction, including classical images: "the Orator hath yoked / The Hours, like young Aurora to his car" while the "Murmur" of the opposition is compared to "winds" that "fret within the Aeolian cave" (501-2; 532-33).

In this passage proper names are clearly employed for their imposing suggestiveness. Wordsworth does not hide the fact that he admires Burke and men of his talent, even if the times were not sympathetic to him. Interestingly, the lines on Burke are followed by a satiric account of "the

Pulpit's oratory," (544) as if the poet were fearful of seeming to overlook the concomitant abuses of language and speech. It is noteworthy that Wordsworth does not name a particular target for this criticism but instead denotes the type of abuse being practiced. He lists the names of works and authors that are mechanically employed by such preachers to embellish their performance:

> Meanwhile the Evangelists, Isaiah, Job,
> Moses, and he who penned, the other day,
> The Death of Abel, Shakespeare, and the Bard
> Whose genius spangled o'er a gloomy theme
> With fancies thick as his inspiring stars,
> And Ossian (doubt not—'tis the naked truth)
> Summoned from streamy Morven—each and all
> Would in their turns, lend ornaments and flowers
> To entwine the crook of eloquence that helped
> The pretty Shepherd, pride of all the plains,
> To rule and guide his captivated flock. . . (562-72)

Wordsworth's point is that the authors and works named have a character and integrity of their own and are abused in being exploited for mere decoration in this way.

Having addressed himself to the more serious and dignified topics of political and pulpit oratory, the poet descends, once again, among the crowds where he claims he will single out "individual sights / Of courage, or integrity, or truth / Or tenderness . . . " (599-601). We note his preference for generic terms when he focuses on "A Father—for the bore that scared name" (603). He says "This One Man" (608) had the sick child on his knee "(The Artificer was to the elbow bare, / And from his work this moment has been stolen)" (613-14). At this point in Book VII the poet testifies to being overwhelmed by the lengthy and variegated spectacle of humanity present in the city. The sight of "a blind Beggar" with a "written paper" pinned to him (639-41) strikes him as an emblem of the ontological mystery behind all that he has seen. Nevertheless, the catalogue of noise and chaos in St. Bartholomew's Fair, as Wordsworth depicts it, is evidence that the poet has succumbed to confusion and some bitterness as a result of his journey through London.

Some of the chaos is portrayed, interestingly, in terms of the misuse of written and spoken

language: "huge scrolls, / Dumb proclamations of the Prodigies," "chattering monkeys," "children. . . that . . . crack the voice in rivalship" (692-700). Even more graphic as part of this lengthy mixed catalogue, or congeries, are the more typical lines,

> The silver-collared Negro with his timbrel,
> Equestrians, tumblers, women, girls and boys,
> Blue-breeched, pink-vested, with high towering plumes.
> All moveables of wonder, from all parts,
> Are here—Albinos, painted Indians, Dwarfs,
> The Horse of knowledge and the learned Pig,
> The Stone-eater, the man that swallows fire,
> Giants, Ventriloquists, and the Invisible Girl,
> The Bust that speaks and moves its goggling eyes,
> The Wax-work, Clock-work, all the marvellous craft
> Of modern Merlins, Wild Beasts, Puppet shows,
> All out-o'-the-way, far-fetched, perverted things . . . . (703-14)

This graphic mixture of proper and generic names including double-epithets, in a largely asyndetic form, conveys a sense of confusion and gluttedness that surpasses anything in the poem. It represents a striking contrast to the list of famous place names with which the idealistic young poet first enters London earlier in the book (128ff). As we will observe later in the discussion, it is only when he returns to a rural setting and contemplates his relationship to the past with the aid of "names" from literary tradition, that the poet can gain some perspective and synthesize the positive and negative facets of his experience in "London's vast domain" (765).

With the lists and catalogues of Book VII in mind, we can begin to consider the extent to which Wordsworth's demeanor toward names in the preceding six books is restrained or "quietistic." Since the first two books in particular deal largely with spots of time in connection with landscape, the infrequency of noticeable aggregations of proper names is not unexpected. In describing his landscape experiences , Wordsworth does include occasional place names such as "Skiddaw's lofty height" (I, 294) or "The sands of Westmoreland," "Cambria's rocky limits" (567-68), "the plain of Windermere" (II, 56), and the like. Their occurrence is strategic, however, and with relatively long intervals of narration in between. From time to time he also emphasizes a generic term like "the cultured Vale" (I, 326) or the

"old Dame" who sat near the stone named for her (II, 43).

One passage that emerges as an exception with regard to the spare use of proper names does occur at the beginning of Book I where the speaker, in treating the origin and initial frustration of his poetic ambitions, rehearses a list of worthy topics he considered but rejected for his own undertaking. The poet confirms that he does possess "the vital soul" and "general Truths, which are themselves a sort / Of Elements and Agents, Under-powers" (150-52). What he lacks, however, is a "little band of yet remembered names . . . To summon back from lonesome banishment" (161-63). He then mentions the possibility of "some British theme, some old / Romantic tale by Milton left unsung" (168-69). Following a less direct allusion to Spenser, he entertains the possibility of relating

> How vanquished Mithridates northward passed
> And, hidden in the cloud of years, became
> Odin, the Father of a race by whom
> Perished the Roman Empire: how the friends
> And followers of Sertorius, out of Spain
> Flying, found shelter in the Fortunate Isles,
> And left their usages, their arts and laws,
> To disappear by a slow gradual death,
> To dwindle and to perish one by one,
> Starved in those narrow bounds: but not the soul
> Of Liberty, which fifteen hundred years
> Survived, and, when the European came
> With skill and power that might not be withstood,
> Did, like a pestilence, maintain its hold
> And wasted down by glorious death that race
> Of natural heroes . . . . (187-202)

He also mentions as a theme

> How, in tyrannic times, some high-souled man,
> Unnamed among the chronicles of kings,
> Suffered in silence for Truth's sake: or
> How that one Frenchman, through continued force
> Of mediation on the inhuman deeds
> Of those who conquered first the Indian Isles,
> Went single in his ministry across
> The Ocean; not to comfort the oppressed,

> But like a thirsty wind, to roam about
> Withering the Oppressor: how Gustavus sought
> Help at his need in Dalecarlia's mines;
> How Wallace fought for Scotland; left the name
> Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
> All over his dear Country; left the deeds
> Of Wallace, like a family of Ghosts,
> To people the steep rocks and river banks,
> Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
> Of independence and stern liberty. (203-20)

With the exception of "that one Frenchman" (Dominique de Gourges), Wordsworth cites directly the names and locations of the heroes he has considered as a subject for his own poem. Particularly of interest is the manner in which he briefly develops "the name / Of Wallace" as a poetic image, endowing it with a brief life of its own. Even more important for the interest in Wordsworth's use of names and naming, however, is the fact that in the course of this narration, the poet rejects the tangible possibilities offered by these names for the more open possibility conveyed by the generic terms, "some philosophic song / Of Truth that cherishes our daily life" (22-30). This statement is not just a postponement of the decision on a subject for the poet since we know that, by the end of Book I, he has rejected all of the more conventional possibilities signified by the proper names in the list for the more "experimental" subject of himself: "forthwith shall be brought down / Through later years the story of my life" (638-39). Consequently, Wordsworth's choice of "some philosophic song / Of Truth" has important implications for the choice of diction in these early books and, to a certain extent, for the poem as a whole. This connection is seen in the more elevated and emotional language of this book and Book II as well, where the poet indicates his recovery from the temporary despair that accompanied his initial failure to determine the direction of this projected poem. The first indication of recovery is seen in the apostrophe that follows the "boat-stealing" spot of time:

> Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
> And of the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
> And souls of lonely places! can I think

A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
Such ministry . . . . (464-68)

The poet's use of a series of different generic names here, as above, reveals a certain unwillingness to entrust the burden of his meaning to any one term. R. A. Foakes refers to this language as a "vocabulary of assertion" composed of "value-words representing concepts or feelings universally regarded as valuable."[131] The point is that as Wordsworth singles out these generic terms and renders them proper nouns through capitalization, he constantly interchanges them or adds new terms to prevent any one of them from assuming an undesired prominence. In this regard we may say that his handling of names is "dampening" and quietistic. As such, this strategy reinforces the effect of the paucity of conventional proper names throughout the narration of landscape experiences in Books I and and II.

In Book II Wordsworth personifies "Nature" several times (51,201,358, 430, 463) but never in close succession and only in a manner to suggest that it is but one designation for that power that is the object of his gratitude. The poet also takes time to note "the self-sufficing power of Solitude" (77) and cites "the sentiment of Being spread / O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still" (401-2). On a more concrete level he singles out "ye rocks and streams / And that still spirit shed from evening air!" (131-2) as well as "thou one dear Vale!" (197) to thank for his experiences. The climactic apostrophe occurs in the form of a series of hypothetical propositions, discussed in Chapter III, whereby the poet pledges his own constancy and integrity of purpose in recounting his course of growth and enlightenment. He begins by claiming his own culpability if he

should fail with grateful voice
To speak of you, ye mountains and ye lakes
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
That dwell among the hills where I was born. (423-26)[132]

[131] R. A. Foakes, *The Romantic Assertion: A Study in the Language of Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 48.
[132] Wordsworth's apostrophe to the forces of nature as catalogued in this passage and elsewhere in *The Prelude* echoes the language of the *Benedicte, Omnia opera Domini* as translated in the Anglican rite: "O All ye Works of

As suggested in Chapter III, the length of this passage and its complex structure involving a series of hypotheticals (if . . . if . . . if . . . then. . . .) reveals a strong element of authorial control—specifically, it shows the narrator going out of his way to demonstrate the logic behind his claims and their validity. The effect of each intervention is to heighten the impact of those names in the apostrophes with which the passage begins and ends: in the early lines, "ye mountains, and ye lakes / And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds. . . " (424-26) and in the concluding ones, "Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis yours, / Ye mountains! thine, O Nature!" (446-47). Particularly the manner in which the series of nouns is reversed, with the addition of "Nature" in the second instance, demonstrates the kind of discretion and control Wordsworth is anxious to exert regarding names in this portion of the poem. It is a strategy that contrasts to the quietism and restraint conveyed in other types of nature imagery in the poem. We recall those passages where the poet describes scenes interrupted only by natural sounds:

> for I would walk alone,
> Under the quiet stars, and at that time
> Have felt what'er there is of power in sound
> To breathe an elevated mood, by form
> Or image unprofaned . . . . (302-05).

Or the more metaphysical reflection:

> Wonder not
> If high the transport, great the joy I felt,
> Communing in this sort through earth and heaven
> With every form of creature, as it looked
> Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
> Of adoration, with an eye of love.
> One song they sang, and it was audible,
> Most audible, then, when the fleshy ear,
> O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,
> Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed. (409-18).

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the Lord, bless ye the Lord . . . O ye Mountains and Hills, bless ye the Lord," etc. Cf. *Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (New York, 1940), 715.

Book III, "Residence at Cambridge," represents a new direction in subject matter. Since it deals with the poet's experience in a more urban setting, it anticipates Book VII to some extent. As we will show, however, Cambridge anticipates London only in a limited way, and Wordsworth's handing of names continues to be restrained and quietistic.

Early in Book VII the speaker offers a catalogue of the famous buildings and features he had visualized before arriving. The speaker in Book III also cites well known features of the college and city of Cambridge, but he does so incidentally and not in catalogue fashion. He mentions "The long-roofed chapel of King's College" (4) and describes how they

> drove beneath the Castle; caught,
> While crossing Magdalene Bridge, a glimpse of Cam;
> And at the *Hoop* alighted, famous Inn. (III, 15-18)

Some thirty lines later he tells us, still in a discursive manner, "The Evangelist St. John my patron was"[133] (46) and "Near me hung Trinity's loquacious clock" (53). He also mentions a statue of Newton (61) that was visible from his quarters. Little else in the way of specific names follows in this section, and it is clear, above all, that the poet sees nothing either numinous or threatening in the features described. Regarding details of the academic routine, he suggests that he is neither prepared nor interested enough to say more: "Of College labours, of the Lecturer's room . . . Let others that know more speak as they know" (64-73). He explains, "Such glory was but little sought by me" (74). He does become more earnest on the subject of his lack of commitment to serious study at that time, but he emphasizes the strength of his feelings, in retrospect, with an apostrophe to the abstraction, "Truth":

> hither had I come,
> Bear witness Truth, endowed with holy powers
> And faculties, whether to work or feel. (87-89)

The speaker's own greater commitment to the subject of his imagination's growth during this time is more apparent in the diction of the passage that ensues. He announces the change in tone:

[133] Wordsworth matriculated in St. John's College.

let me dare to speak
A higher language, say that now I felt
What independent solaces were mine . . . . (99-101)

We note especially his reliance on generic nouns, emphasized by capitalization in some cases:

I looked for universal things; perused
The common countenance of earth and sky;
Earth, nowhere unembellished by some trace
Of that first Paradise whence man was driven;
And sky, whose beauty and bounty are expressed
By the proud name she bears—the name of Heaven.
I called on both to teach me what they might;
Or turning the mind in upon herself
Pored, watched expected, listened, spread my thoughts
And spread them with a wider creeping; felt
Incumbencies more awful, visitings
Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,
That tolerates the indignities of Time,
And, from the centre of Eternity
All finite motions overruling, lives
In glory immutable. (III, 106-21)

Wordsworth's treatment of the words "earth" and "sky" is particularly interesting here. He presents them initially as common nouns, in lower case and in the form of a subtle personification. In the third line of the passage he addresses himself directly to the implication of the respective names, pointing out "Earth's" association with "that first Paradise," a proper name with a definite heroic and epic heritage—also a deference to Milton, his predecessor at Cambridge—and the connection of "sky" with "the proud name" of "Heaven." In this manner the poet, in using the universal common term "earth" and "sky," can point to their relationship with their colorful and heroic past without, however, appropriating more of that tradition than he feels would be suitable for his context. His restraint and discretion in this gesture are reinforced by the character of the diction in the remainder of the passage, particularly the abstract terms, "Upholder," "Time," and "Eternity."

After the poet discusses at some length that stage of his development in which he ""To every natural form, rock, fruit or flower . . . / I gave a moral life," (130-32), he addresses his "Friend" and

interlocutor to announce:

> Of genius, power,
> Creation and divinity itself
> I have been speaking, for my theme has been
> What passed within me. (173-76)

Here the echo of *Paradise Lost, "*Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit / Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste / Brought death into the world . . . Sing Heavenly Muse . . . ."[134], is important. Wordsworth claims that his theme is both more particular and more universal than the "loss of Eden." His story of "what passed within me," of "my own heart," and of "my youthful mind" (176-79) encompasses the broader catalogue of generic terms, "genius, power, / Creation and divinity itself."

It is relevant that Wordsworth does take the opportunity in this book on his college life to speak of his relationship to Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton. This is unexpected when we consider his general remarks on books elsewhere in Book III. He speaks of them as something almost alien to his sensibility at that time, "those long vistas, sacred catacombs, / Where mighty *minds* lie visibly entombed" (341-42). However the poet does make a distinction by presenting, in landscape settings, the names of those poets so important to him:

> Beside the pleasant Mill of Trompington
> I laughed with Chaucer; in the hawthorne shade;
> Heard him, while birds were warbling, tell his tales
> Of amorous passion. And that gentle Bard,
> Chosen by the Muses for their Page of State—
> Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven
> With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace,
> I called him Brother, Englishman, and Friend!
> Yea, our blind Poet, who in his later day,
> Stood almost single; uttering odious truth—
> An awful soul—I seemed to see him here
> Familiar, and in his scholar's dress
> Bounding before me, yet a stripling youth—
> A body, no better, with his rosy cheeks

[134] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I, 1-6, *The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. Douglas Bush (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965). All references to the poem are to this edition.

> Angelical, keen eye, courageous look
> And conscious step of purity and pride. (III, 278-95).

Wordsworth's technique here is to portray the poets, not in terms of a written text but rather as animate forces interacting with him in a landscape. Chaucer laughs with him in the hawthorn shade, among warbling birds, and Spenser is compared to the moon moving through the heavens and is designated with the less imposing names of "Brother, Englishman, and Friend." Even Milton, in spite of the weighty and serious themes associated with his work, is seen as "a stripling youth . . . Bounding before me." Thus the proper names of the poets introduced here are easily absorbed into the youthful poet's experience. They do not represent any kind of distant force to be confronted with anxiety by the speaker, unlike much of what is seen in Book VII. Even the passage following the lines quoted above, where Wordsworth describes his accidental intoxication "in the very room / Honoured by Milton's name" (298) assumes a mock-heroic tone that can only be comic. While the passage does not detract from the admiration expressed for Milton, it does offer a light-hearted contrast to the more weighty tribute to Burke in Book VII.

It is noteworthy, finally, that Wordsworth attempts some satire in Book III, in one instance directed to educational practices of the day, and in another, to vice generally. The poet has often been criticized for the attack on education as a distraction in the narration. Here there is little in the way of such proper names or catalogues as characterize the more potent satire of the Bartholomew Fair passage in Book VII. He begins subtly with some advice for educators when he addresses "Ye Presidents and Deans" (410) and tells them to emulate the spirit of the past:

> Different sight
> Those venerable Doctors saw of old,
> When all who dwelt within these famous walls
> Led in abstemiousness a studious life. (446-48)

Some distance below, however, Wordsworth announces that he saw in Cambridge "in dwarf proportions . . . The limbs of the great world" (581). He proceeds to depict his subject, in an allegorical

mode,

> And here was Labour, his own bond-slave; Hope,
> That never set the pains against the prize;
> Idleness halting with his weary clog,
> And poor misguided Shame, and witless Fear,
> And simple Pleasure foraging for Death;
> Honour misplaced, and Dignity astray;
> Feuds, factions, flatteries, enmity and guile
> Murmuring submission, and bald government,
> (The idol weak as the idolator,)
> And Decency and Custom starving Truth,
> And blind Authority beating with his staff
> The child that might have led him . . . . (596-606)

The personification of these generic qualities creates an impression that is altogether un-emphatic. In this respect "the limbs of the great world" depicted in Book III are present more in form than substance.

The poet's return to his native landscape in Book IV is characterized, as we would expect, by a more minimalist use of names. Use of proper names is strategic and spare; specific names like "Windermere" or "Winander" are almost nonexistent. Generic names such as "Nature," "Man," "Fancy," "Time," and also "Angel" and "God" occur in a few climactic instances. Wordsworth does occasionally incorporate a classical image; He describes a poetic image that he came upon during composition as "like Venus rising from the sea" (114). He also compares the local "Ferryman" to "Charon of the flood" (13-14) in an allusion which both de Selincourt and W. J. B. Owen find "inapt" for Wordsworth's context since its source in *The Aeneid* portrays Charon as a "gloomy" and unsavory god.[135]

In spite of the subtle allusions to classical tradition, the proper names that do occur in Book IV are deliberate and restrained in the manner described for Books I and II. It is a feature that reflects the theme of quietism throughout and that is apt for Wordsworth's purpose here since the poet is portrayed as finding restoration through the transcendental encounters in landscape and his encounters with the rural populace.

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[135] Owen, 4.

One of his memorable "epiphanies" illustrates this point as he acknowledges "silent vows" that were made. Watching the sunrise as a backdrop to the early morning activities of birds and labourers in the field, the speaker proclaims

> to the brim
> My heart was full: I made no vows, but vows
> Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
> Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
> A dedicated Spirit. (333-37)

On a different level, the poet's own encounter with a rustic soldier that occurs toward the end of Book IV is also quietistic. Little specific detail is offered except that the man had served in "the Tropic Islands" (422). More notably, the interchange itself between the speaker and the old man is laconic. The man "told in few plain words a soldier's tale" (421) and "He all the while was in demeanor calm, / Concise in answer" (440-41). And, after their brief discourse, the poet says he "sought with quiet heart my distant home" (469).

Since Wordsworth feels the need to acknowledge his debt to "Books" in Book V, we expect to find interesting implications for his stance toward names and naming. It is clear, as many have pointed out, however, that this section of the poem is rather a "general discourse on the value of imaginative literature"[136] and that Wordsworth, to the surprise of many, focuses more on children's books than serious works. More significantly for the purpose of this discussion, however, Wordsworth's handling of names continues to show restraint and quietism. This is in spite of the fact that he incorporates the new features of the parable and dream vision and that, both here and in book VI, he deals with such topics as education and his own relationship to language.

He begins with a solemn apostrophe to "Man" as "Earth's paramount Creature" (V, 4-5) and includes a personification of "Contemplation" and "Intellect." He continues to talk about "the Mind" and "The consecrated works of Bard and Sage"(42) in a vaguely elevated manner. This use of generic

[136] Ernest de Selincourt, Introd. to *The Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind by William Wordsworth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926), xl.

proper names contrasts somewhat to the ensuing dream vision, a passage that has been the subject of much speculation. The speaker mentions having just put down "The famous history of the errant knight / Recorded by Cervantes" (60-61) prior to the dream which features an "uncouth" figure that seems "an Arab of the Bedouin tribes" (77) but who later also resembles "the knight / Whose tale Cervantes tells; yet not the knight, / But was an Arab of the desert too" (122-24). He later calls him "This Arab phantom . . . This semi-Quixote" (142-43). Wordsworth's technique here is to provide a combination of unrelated details with associations deriving from their respective heritages: the Arab gives the gift of "Euclid's Elements" and the shell whose "blast of harmony" is "An Ode, in passion uttered" (95-96). The effect of the minimal and seemingly unrelated proper names is to represent an imaginative vision without, at the same time, communicating one. For the poet, at this stage in his development, it constitutes, in Frank McConnell's words, a "daemonic" and "self-reductive allegory" representing the potential power of the imagination which he is yet afraid to confront."[137]

Thus far in Book V, then, Wordsworth has offered a parable involving three books but has otherwise avoided saying much about specific authors or works, with the exception of a brief appositional reference to "Shakespeare, or Milton, labourers divine!" (165). Following the parable, the poet says he now recognizes that "the best of other guides and dearest helpers" have been "left unthanked, unpraised" (168-69). In an emotional address to Coleridge, he seems anxious to verbalize a tribute, so long delayed, to literary works, but he explains that literary language is really ineffective for such a purpose:

> Yet wherefore speak?
> Why call upon a few weak words to say
> What is already written in the hearts
> Of all that breathe—what in the path of all
> Drops daily from the tongue of every child,
> Wherever man is found?

It is soon apparent, however, that Wordsworth is using the argumentative device of paralipsis, or

[137] McConnell, 133.arts

making a point by claiming to withhold it (See Chapter III). Again he says he will let the past speak for itself,

> That portion of my story I shall leave
> There registered: whatever else of power
> Or pleasure sown, or fostered thus, may be
> Peculiar to myself, let that remain
> Where still it works, though hidden from all search
> Among the depths of time. (192-96).

But, just when he convinces his listener of the desirability of saying no more, he pronounces his tribute to poets and books:

> Yet is it just
> That here, in memory of all books which lay
> Their sure foundations in the heart of man,
> Whether by native prose or numerous verse,
> That in the name of all inspired souls,
> From Homer the great Thunderer, from the voice
> That roars along the bed of Jewish song,
> And that more varied and elaborate
> Those trumpet-tones of harmony that shake
> Our shores in England—from those loftiest notes
> Down to the low and wren-like warbings, made
> For cottagers and spinners at the wheel . . . .
> 'Tis just that in behalf of these, the works,
> And of the men that framed them, whether known
> Or sleeping nameless in their scattered graves,
> That I should here assert their rights, attest
> Their honours, and should, once for all, pronounce
> Their benediction; speak of them as Powers
> For ever to be hallowed; only less,
> For what we are and what we may become,
> Than Nature's self, which is the breath of God,
> Of His pure Word by miracle revealed. (197-222).

Interestingly, Wordsworth's tribute, while elevated and broad in reference, generally eschews names of individuals and works despite his reference to "Homer the great Thunderer." Instead, his catalogue becomes increasingly less specific with "the voice / That runs along the bed of

Jewish song" and "trumpet-tones of harmony that shake / Our shores in England" to "low and wren-like warblings. . . . " As the structure of the passage indicates, the poet places more emphasis on his own act of expressing the tribute: he will "assert their rights, attest their honours . . . . pronounce / Their benediction; speak of them as Powers . . . ." More importantly, Wordsworth sees himself as bestowing greatest honour on the poets by designating them with a generic, proper name, "Powers." Once again, he is not interested in specific names as a means of asserting his tie to tradition or for whatever esthetic value they might have in terms of diction. His manner regarding names is, from this perspective, quietistic. As the poet announces in the subsequent verse paragraph: "This verse is dedicate to Nature's self, / And things that teach as Nature teaches"(230-31).

As been noted by many, Wordsworth shows more interest in the role of children's literature in Book V. In this connection he first presents the child prodigy who

> Can string you names of cities, districts, towns
> The whole world over, tight as beads of dew
> Upon a gossamer thread. . . . (320-22)

This "model of a child" is cited in opposition to the boy of Winander who "Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls" (373). Earlier in Chapter II of this study, we suggested that Wordsworth uses the common, generic term "Boy" in the passage on the Boy of Winander as a conscious memorial to the kind of purity the boy symbolizes, and that it is not part of an evasion of more direct speech as others have implied:[138] "There was a Boy: ye knew him well, ye cliffs / And Islands of Winander . . . " (364-65), "This Boy was taken from his mates, and died" (389), and "this Boy / Who slumbers at her [referring to the village church] feet . . . " (401-02). In contrast, Wordsworth now mentions the over-trained boy simply as a "model of a child" (299). The word "model" is ironically ambiguous here. He does make an exception in citing a few specific names from childhood literature as a reaction to the mechanical and rigorous training of this youth:

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[138] Cf. Frances Ferguson, *Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 165.

> Oh! give us once again the wishing cap
> Of Fortunatus, and the invisible coat
> Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood
> And Sabra in the forest with St. George! (341-44).

When Wordsworth, as one might expect, turns to his own experience with books in childhood, he refers to a book of "the Arabian tales . . A little yellow, canvas-covered book" (461-62), that he identified with magic and adventure. Although the title suggests Wordsworth has *The Arabian Nights* in mind, he does not further allude to the contents of the work but says the book itself represented an experience he wanted to penetrate further and that he and his friends vowed to purchase other such volumes (464-72).

Thus, without much in the way of reference to major poets and their achievements, and without much in the way of specific reference to anyone, Wordsworth concludes his book addressing the subject of "Books." His final passages on his immature susceptibility to the sensual qualities of "words in tuneful order" (555) is significant for the remainder of *The Prelude*, however. He describes a time when words were "sweet" to him,

> For their own *sakes*, a passion and a power;
> And phrases pleased me chosen for delight,
> For pomp, or love. (556-58).

In this context the speaker says only that such naiveté was understandable and forgivable at such a stage:

> What wonder, then, if sounds
> Of exultation echoed through the groves!
> For images, and sentiments, and words,
> And everything encountered or pursued
> In that delicious world of poesy,
> Kept holiday, a never-ending show,
> With music, incense, festival and flowers! (577-83)

The images of "music, incense, festival and flowers" are quite different from what the poet says about words several lines later. The famous passage on "the mystery of words" suggests that the mature poet,

in looking back, views language as something much more complex and even problematical. It is an emphasis that becomes increasingly important in *The Prelude* and one that affords insight into Wordsworth's handling of names in the books that follow:

> Visionary power
> Attends the motion of the viewless winds,
> Embodied in the mystery of words:
> There, darkness makes abode, and all the host
> Of shadowy things work endless changes,—there,
> As in a mansion like their proper home,
> Even forms and substances are circumfused
> By that transparent veil with light divine,
> And, through the turnings intricate of verse,
> Present themselves as objects recognised,
> In flashes, and with glory not their own. (595-605)

Book VI continues to focus on the important theme of the poet's orientation to language and his consciousness of a relationship to the great writers. As the book closes Wordsworth describes two landscape incidents that demonstrate the irony behind the importance attached by the human mind to certain names. His recovery from initial confusion regarding these incidents is signified, for the first time in the poem, in his emphatic willingness to employ proper names as poetic images.

The speaker opens Book VI, entitled "Cambridge and the Alps," with a new explanation of his hesitancy and delay in committing himself to a serious artistic purpose. He appears self-critical at first in delineating "This spurious virtue, rather let it bear / A name it more deserves, this cowardice . . ." that gave "sanction to that over-love / Of freedom" (30-33). But it is soon clear that the difficulty stems from the poet's own insecurity regarding language. He acknowledges that the precedent of the great poets was intimidating to him for a time, but that he was largely recovering from this view:

> The instinctive humbleness,
> Maintained even by the very name and thought
> Of printed books and authorship, began
> To melt away; and further, the dread awe
> Of mighty names was softened down and seemed
> Approachable. (57-62)

At one point he notes that even "Spenser's self" could not have had "more tranquil visions in his youth" than the present speaker had seen "on calm, clear nights / Alone" (89-94). The real problem lay in his lack of confidence regarding language, something deriving from the mechanical training in imitation of classical models from his early school days:

> in fine,
> I was a better judge of thoughts than words,
> Mislead in estimating words, not only
> By common inexperience of youth,
> But by the trade in classic niceties,
> The dangerous craft of culling term and phrase
> From languages that want the living voice
> To carry meaning to the natural heart. (105-12)

The immediate effect of this insecurity regarding words was that the young poet found comfort in intellectual disciplines unencumbered by the medium of language, such as "the rudiments / Of geometric science" (116-17). He explains the pleasure with which he could meditate "On the relation those abstractions bear / To Nature's laws" (123-24), and he describes that from "the same source" he gained

> a sense
> Of . . .
> . . . paramount belief; there, recognized
> A type, for finite natures, of the one
> Supreme Existence, the surpassing life
> Which . . .
> . . . is
> And hath the name of, God. (130-39)

Thus the speaker both explains and demonstrates his uneasiness with more specific and suggestive words, and, by implication, names:

> Mighty is the charm
> Of those abstractions to a mind beset
> With images and haunted by herself . . . . (158-60)

At this point the poet does not deal further with his problem with language. Instead, the narration

proceeds with descriptions of his journey around Cambridge and the Alps.

Wordsworth is slightly less sparing of proper names in the landscape descriptions of these passages than he had been in Books I, II, and IV. In the section depicting his native environs we find local place names such as "Dovedale's spiry rocks," "Yorkshire dales" (193-94), the "banks / Of Emont" associated with Sidney's *Arcadia* (203-24), "Helvellyn" (208), "Border Beacon" (233), and the like. Similarly, in the section on France he mentions "Burgundy" (375), "Swift Rhone" (378), the "Convent of Chartreuse" (418), and St. Bruno's pines" (436). Such names are not in any way obtrusive, however, and serve mainly to add an element of concreteness that counterbalances his characteristic use of capitalized generic and abstract names, which also appear in this section. Examples are "Nature," "Life," "Death," "Liberty," and "Justice." When Bowman Wiley compares this passage in Book VI with the earlier passage on the same landscape in *Descriptive Sketches*, he finds Wordsworth's use of proper names to be greater in *The Prelude*. What distinguishes *Descriptive Sketches* so markedly is the abundance of personifications and epithets whereby generic and abstract nouns are rendered proper nouns through syntax.[139] The point is that Wordsworth uses more proper nouns in the usual sense of simple person or place names in *The Prelude* passage but avoids calling particular attention to them as such by using fewer stylized poetic devices. His interest in maintaining an emphasis on simpler language and unadorned names is suggested in his statement to Coleridge following the passage on British landscape, "Of rivers, fields, / and groves I speak to thee, my Friend!" (264-65) where the contrast to the opening lines from *Paradise Lost* underlies Wordsworth's plain diction and common, generic names.

As the narration of the journey through France continues, Wordsworth once again touches on the problem of language and its reliability, particularly as it applies to names. In one of the memorable "spots of time" in the latter part of the book, the speaker tells how he and his companions beheld

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[139] Bowman G. Wiley, *The Clear Synthesis: A Study of Wordsworth's Development as a Descriptive Poet from 1793-1808*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature under the direction of Prof. Erwin A. Stürzl, No. 16 (1974), 147.

> Unveiled the summit of Mont Blanc, and grieved
> To have a soulless image on the eye
> That had usurped upon a living thought
> That never more could be. (525-28)

He is saying that his expectations of Mont Blanc, the associations connected with the name in his imagination, proved greater than the experience of the view. It is as though "the living thought" which "never more could be" had been preferable. When the poet claims that the "Vale / Of Chamouny . . . made rich amends" (528-32), we infer that it could only be in an elegiac sense since it is unlikely that the name, Vale of Chamouny, had the vivid associations for him beforehand that the name Mont Blanc had had.

With the same emphasis, the speaker incudes a second such "spot of time" shortly after where a similar disappointment occurs. This time the disappointment is focused on the idea of "crossing the Alps"; to add emphasis Wordsworth italicizes the phrase, confirming his dejected surprise when a peasant replies, "*that we had crossed the Alps*" (591). In this instance the poet elaborates upon the impressions he had just subsequent to this disappointment. He realizes that his "Imagination," which he makes a point of re-naming as a "Power" that is called such only "Through sad incompetence of human speech" (592-93), asserted a potency beyond the empirical fact of the crossing, which occurred unrealized by the travelers due to mistaken directions. In this passage, also, the poet wishes to make clear that his subsequent recognition of what happened "made amends" for the disappointing experience. He suggests that this behavior of the imagination testifies to the greatness of "the soul" itself, which,

> Seeks for no trophies, struggles for no spoils
> That may attest her prowess, blest in thoughts
> That are their own reward,
> Strong in herself and in beautitude
> That hides her, like the mighty flood of Nile
> Poured from his fount of Abyssinian clouds
> To fertilize the whole Egyptian plain. (610-16)

In a rare and effective stylistic gesture, Wordsworth uses an emphatic simile with place names rich in sound and suggestiveness. He can be seen, here, to emulate Milton's use of place names for effect, for what Havens has called their "imaginative suggestiveness and sonorous pomp."[140] The impact Wordsworth achieves with the simile and exotic names results from the fact that his use of names up to this point and throughout the poem, is characterized by spareness and discretion. This same practice is responsible for the success he achieves, on a slightly different level, with the use of names in Book VII.

The passages on the experiences of disappointment in episodes or "spots of time" in landscape in this section of Book VI are contemplative and solemn in tone. As with Books I and II, however, Book VI concludes in a more positive and assertive voice. Much as he does in I and II, Wordsworth signifies this recovery with the use of apostrophes. In the earlier books, we noted that the apostrophes were addressed to common, generic names rendered proper nouns through personification. Here the poet veers from his customary technique and pronounces his gratitude specifically to the lakes, Locarno and Como:

> Locarno! spreading out in width like Haven,
> How does thou cleave to the poetic heat,
> Bask in the sunshine of the memory;
> And Como! thou, a treasure whom the earth
> Keeps to herself, confined as in a depth
> Of Abyssinian privacy. I spake
> Of thee, thy chestnut woods, and garden plots
> Of Indian corn tended by dark-eyed maids . . .
> . . . I strove
> To chant your praise; nor can approach you now
> Ungreeted by a more melodious Song . . . . (657-73)

As with the simile cited above, Wordsworth's apostrophes here are climactic because his use of such ornamental figures elsewhere in *The Prelude* is restrained. And, as with the proper names "Nile,"

[140] R. D. Havens, *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922), 192.

"Abyssinian," and "Egyptian" before, the proper names "Locarno," and "Como," as well as the adjectives "Abyssinian" and" Indian" are singularly effective and appropriate for the context.[141] The poet's own consciousness of his gesture of tribute is reinforced by the statement, "I spake of thee" (662-63) and "I strove / To chant your praise nor can approach you now / Ungreeted by a more melodious Song" ((671-73).

The rhetorical assertiveness and confidence with which Book VI concludes is thematically and structurally effective. Its impact derives, to a significant extent, from the restraint Wordsworth shows in the handling of names in the preceding text, as we have attempted to demonstrate. However, the questions he now poses regarding the reliability and vulnerability of language, and to some extent, of names, are not quickly resolved. We will see that Book VII and the books on the French Revolution are very much concerned with the philosophical tension between what names suggest and what they actually stand for.

In the section that follows we will reexamine Book VII from the standpoint of Wordsworth's philosophical interest in the irony associated with names and language in human experience. This particular focus for the discussion, together with the earlier observations on imagery, will enable us to establish even more emphatically the climactic position of Book VII, on London, and also Book VIII, on the return to landscape, within the structure of *The Prelude* as a whole.

ii.

Earlier in the chapter we offered a sketch of the number and variety of catalogues and lists that comprise Book VII. However, Wordsworth does more than describe and objectify the variety of phenomena he encounters. He makes specific statements about the ability of words and names to mislead. After explaining how the magic he associated with the London of St. Paul's Whispering Gallery,

[141] His friend Coleridge shows a similar predilection for the sound and associations of "Abyssinian," in "Kubla Kahn," l. 39.

the River, Westminster, and the Giants of Guildhall (129ff.) exceeded even what the exotic place names, "Rome," "Alcairo," "Babylon," and "Persepolis" suggested to him, he notes, in light of the disappointment of the actual confrontation, "O, wond'rous power of words by simple faith / Licensed to take the meaning that we love!"(119-20) following which exclamation he cites the delight he attached as a youth to the names "Vauxhall and Ranelagh."[142] Clearly the narrator is outspoken in claiming that names are "Licensed to take the meaning that we love" through "simple faith." But this perspective is related to the insecurity the young poet felt toward suggestive imagery in Book VI, an insecurity that was also dramatized, to some extent, in the disappointing visit to Mont Blanc and the crossing of the Alps. In the same vein, the poet says that in visiting the famous places and features associated with London in Book VII:

> I looked upon the living scene;
> Familiarly perused it; oftentimes,
> In spite of strongest disappointment, pleased
> Through courteous self-submission, as a tax
> Paid to the object by prescriptive right. (144-48)

Along with the failure of names to deliver what is promised, Wordsworth emphasizes the obtrusive, daemonic character that names and symbols in the city can have. Among the lists of varied phenomena the poet confronts in the course of Book VII, Wordsworth includes several images without names that, like many other features, can be seen but not known. For example, he describes:

> Shop after shop, with symbols, blazoned names,
> And all the tradesman's honours overhead;
> . . . fronts of houses, like a title-page,
> With letters huge inscribed from top to toe. (158-61)

as well as

> . . . files of ballads dangle from dead walls;
> Advertisements, of giant-size, from high

[142] David Ferry, *The Limits of Mortality: An Essay on Wordsworth's Major Poems* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), 137.

Press forward, in all colours, on the sight;
These, bold in conscious merit lower down
That, fronted with a most imposing word,
Is, peradventure, one in masquerade. (193-98)

Words and names in the city obtrude upon the viewer's sensibility; and the implication, as the last hanging ballad described suggests, is that they deceive.

The last passage cited also includes people, particularly one in a sailor's uniform "beside a range / Of well-formed characters, with chalk inscribed / Upon the smooth flat stones" (205-07). Wordsworth offers nothing further than the images themselves, suggesting that the visualized words and names are part of the vast *nicht-sich* encountered by the poet here, things that can be viewed but never known. This is an emphasis confirmed by one exceptional instance where the poet is recounting various theatrical productions found in London at that time, when the name "Maid of Buttermere" (297) comes up, alluding to the story of a rustic girl betrayed by a bigamous adventurer.[143] After a brief description of the plot, the narrator asserts, in an aside to Coleridge,

These words to thee
Must needs bring back the moment when we first,
Ere the broad world rang with the maiden's name,
Beheld her serving at the cottage inn,
Both stricken, as she entered or withdrew,
With admiration of her modest mien
And carriage . . . . (302-08)

And, not content with these comments, he unexpectedly repeats her name with an apostrophe:

From this memorial tribute to my theme
I was returning, when, with sundry forms
Commingled—shapes with met me in the way
That we must tread—thy image rose again,
Maiden of Buttermere! (316-20)

Thus the name, "Maid of Buttermere," stands out from the many encountered by the poet in London as

[143] Lindenberger, 106.

having genuine meaning and emotional significance for him. It contrasts markedly with most that precede and follow it in the narration, just as the Maid of Buttermere and her dead infant contrast, in their peace and innocence, to the image of the child, subsequently portrayed, a "lovely Boy" surrounded by "dissolute men" and "shameless women" of the city (339ff).

The example of the Maid of Buttermere as a memorial to genuine sentiment and feeling among the impersonality of the rest that the speaker beholds is repeated in one additional and important passage in Book VII. Wordsworth employs Burke's name to represent public and, specifically, political oratory, a subject apparently intended for attack. As the passage on Burke reveals, however, the poet shows substantial admiration for him and the abilities he represents. This is in spite of the statement, just preceding the lines on Burke, about the public orator in general:

> He winds away his never-ending horn;
> Words follow words, sense seems to follow sense:
> What memory and what logic! till the strain
> Transcendant, superhuman as it seemed,
> Grows tedious even in a young man's ear. (507-11)

We note, however, that in his apostrophe to the "Genius of Burke," the poet emulates oratorical syntax and occasionally uses classical allusion exactly as the orator was expected to do:

> Genius of Burke! forgive the pen seduced
> By specious wonders, and too slow to tell
> Of what the ingenuous, what bewildered men,
> Beginning to mistrust their boastful guides,
> And wise men, willing to grow wiser, caught,
> Rapt auditors! from thy most eloquent tongue—
> Now mute, for ever mute in the cold grave.
> I see him –old, but vigorous in age,—
> Stand like an oak whose stag-horn branches start
> Out of his leafy brow, the more to awe
> The younger brethren of the grove. But some—
> While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth
> Against all systems built on abstract rights,
> Keen ridicule; the majesty proclaims
> Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time;

> Declares the vital power of social ties
> Endeared by Custom; and, with high disdain,
> Exploding upstart Theory, insists
> Upon the allegiance to which men are born— 530
> Some—say at once a froward multitude—
> Murmur (for truth is hated where not loved)
> As the winds fret within the Aeolian cave,
> Galled by their monarach's chain. (512-34)

Some of the obvious oratorical devices that stand out here are the repetition of single words and their roots in the use of "Genius" and "ingenuous," "wise" and "wiser" (512-17). The use of a succession of active verbs without conjunctions for the act of speaking—"forewarns, denounces, launches forth . . . proclaims. . . Declares. . . insists . .. (523ff.)—also lends weight and dignity. Of a clearly classical origin are the images by which Burke is compared to a tall oak with a leafy brow and the image of winds in the Aeolian cave. The passage could be analyzed at much greater length, but the point of greatest interest here is that Wordsworth treats Burke reverently and as a memorial. This is clear from both the opening apostrophe, "Genius of Burke!" and the *ubi sunt* theme several lines later: "thy most eloquent tongue--/ Now mute, forever mute in the cold grave" (512-18). Wordsworth's style also testifies to his admiration, tinged with nostalgia, for Burke. He use of oratorical syntax and classical references is serious and not to be compared with the mock-heroic vein in which he treats the incident originating in Milton's room in Book III. Thus, Wordsworth concludes the passage on Burke with the statement,

> Could a youth, and one
> In ancient story verse, whose breast had heaved
> Under the weight of classic eloquence,
> Sit, see and hear, unthankful, uninspired? (540-43)

The portrait that follows of the "comely bachelor" (551) who manipulates style along with names of other authors and their books to adorn his presentation, offers a vehicle for satire that the context of Book VI seems to demand. Wordsworth's treatment of the young preacher in this passage, discussed earlier in the chapter, reinforces the dignity of his demeanor towards Burke.

In spite of the tone of the passage on Burke, Book VII concludes with the catalogue of confused and grotesque imagery of Bartholomew Fair, previously discussed. As with the images of unspecified written names and words that occur in the earlier catalogue of city life, here in Bartholomew Fair we find "staring pictures and huge scrolls / Dumb proclamations of the Prodigies" (692-3). More noticeable, however, is the mockery of both spoken language and sound in the catalogue that follows. It is objectified in the literal meaning of the lines and stressed by their cacophonous effect:

> chattering monkeys dangling from their poles,
> And children whirling in their roundabouts;
> With those that stretch the neck and strain the eyes,
> And crack the voice in rivalship, the crowd
> Inviting; with buffoons against buffoons
> Grimacing, writhing, screaming, —him who grinds
> The hurdy-gurdy, at the fiddle weaves,
> Rattles the salt-box, thumps the kettle-drum,
> And him who at the trumpet puffs his cheeks,
> The silver-collared Negro with his timbrel,
> Equestrians, tumbler, women, girls and boys,
> Blue-breeched, pink-vested, with high-towering plumes.
> All moveables of wonder, from all parts
> Are here—Albinos, painted Indians, Dwarfs,
> The Horse of knowledge, and the learned Pig,
> The Stone-eater, the man who swallows fire,
> Giants, Ventriloquists, the Invisible Girl,
> The Bust that speaks and moves its goggling eyes,
> The Wax-work, Clock-work, all the marvelous craft
> Of modern Merlins, Wild Beasts, Puppet-shows,
> All out-o'-the way, far-fetched, perverted things . . . .(694-714)

In spite of the speaker's aloofness and sense of good-natured irony regarding the vulnerability of language and names as Book VII begins, "O wond'rous power of words by simple faith / Licensed to take the meaning that we love," he now illustrates the chaos that can be evoked by indiscriminate mixtures of names and other forms of imagery in the concluding section on Bartholomew Fair. He

reveals a sensibility overwhelmed by the abundance of alien phenomena in the individuals and life-styles he has viewed in London. When Book VII ends, the poet has encountered names as ambiguous and, at times, frightening obtrusions within his London experience. He is clearly in need of some form of restoration.

The poet's return to landscape in Book VIII provides the needed restoration. It also illustrates the beginning of his more mature and synthesized view of what he saw in London. That Book VIII constitutes what is essentially a complement to and completion of Book VII is also apparent on more than one level. The opening description of a rustic fair and the use of the "roving eye" of the landscape poet suggest a structural parallel with the journey through London. However it is in Wordsworth's freedom in the use of proper names for description and his newly found confidence in his relationship to language that the critical feature of Book VIII lies.

Book VIII opens with an apostrophe to "Helvellyn," and Wordsworth's emphasis on animated sound in landscape is reminiscent, by contrast, of the noise and commotion of London:

> What sounds are those, Helvellyn, that are heard
> Up to thy summit, through the depth of air
> Ascending, as if distance had the power
> To make the sounds more audible? (1-4)

His sketch of the rustic fair with brief lists of images including a "lame man or a blind" (26) and "a speech-maker by rote / Pulling the strings of a boxed raree show" (32-33)evokes a less threatening version of the potentially destructive qualities of civilization seen in Bartholomew Fair.

The most important feature of Book VIII, however, is the poet's new sense of continuity with the past, an emphasis that is seen in the use of numerous and varied names from literary tradition. One early example is reminiscent in a significant way of Book VII. There he had claimed that, in his mind's view, London was greater than any romance could describe or than what had "been set forth of Rome, Alcairo, Babylon or Persepolis" (77-81). The allusion to *Paradise Lost* (I, 717-19) is ironic in

this context, however, because the narrator soon confirms his disappointment in actually visiting the sites he had envisioned. Now in Book VIII, the poet states that what he actually sees in his native landscape is a

> . . . tract more exquisitely fair
> Than that famed paradise of ten thousand trees,
> Or Gehol's matchless gardens, for delight
> Of the Tartarian dynasty composed
> (Beyond that mighty wall, not fabulous,
> China's stupendous mound) . . . . (75-80)

Exotic place names occur with a general imitation of the Miltonic mode such as may be found in the description of Eden in *Paradise Lost*, IV, 268-75, with its use of negative comparisons.[144] The point is that the speaker now can employ literary allusion as a negative comparison, not to what he imagines, but to what he himself sees and enjoys. This gesture of negative comparison occurs again, in a more emphatic form, when Wordsworth describes the shepherds of his native district. They were:

> Not such as Saturn ruled 'mid Latian wilds,
> With arts and laws so tempered, that their lives
> Left, even to us toiling in this late day,
> A bright tradition of the golden age;
> Not such as, 'mid Arcadian fastnesses
> Sequestered, handed down among themselves
> Felicity, in Grecian song renowned;
> Nor such as, when the adverse fate had driven,
> From house and home, the courtly band whose fortunes
> Entered, with Shakespeare's genius, the wild woods
> Of Arden, amid sunshine or in shade
> Culled the best fruits of Time's uncounted hours,
> Ere Phoebe sighed for the false Ganymede;
> Or there where Perdita and Florizel
> Together danced, Queen of the feast and King;
> Nor such as Spenser fabled. (129-44)

The many proper names In this passage allude to Greece and the pastoral tradition generally as well as to Shakespeare's romances and comedies, particularly *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale* as well as

[144] DeSelincourt, 550*n*.

Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender.* The question of why Wordsworth goes out of his way to summon particular poets and works as a negative comparison is a significant one. David Ferry suggests that the poet's frequent insistence that his shepherds are not of the golden age indicates a nostalgia for that age.[145] This explanation is not quite adequate, however. Perhaps Wordsworth's technique can best be understood as a means of appropriating the richness of the contexts suggested by the poet's names and the names of their works and the characters in them, without at the same time allowing himself to be limited by the tradition they represent. This same is illustrated early in Book I where Wordsworth lists traditional themes he could treat in his poem but then rejects all of them, including "some old / Romantic tale by Milton left unsung" (168-69) for "some philosophic song / Of Truth" (229-30). By citing specific topics by name, and Milton, he shows his reverence for tradition and his continuity with it but does not limit his own purpose. As Lindenberger has claimed regarding these types of allusions in *The Prelude*, their presence widens the poem's scope and impression of comprehensiveness.[146]

As we have suggested, the narrative that precedes Books VII and VIII is characterized by notable restraint regarding the use of names for purposes of example or allusion, as though the poet were conscious of the dangers of employing them mechanically like the preacher who entwines his "crook of eloquence" in Book VII. Here in VIII, however, the speaker demonstrates a new confidence in his own powers that is reflected in his willingness to name when the context justifies it. There are a number of passages in Book VIII that feature names as memorials in the manner described. Wordsworth continues his narrative on shepherds, both ancient and modern:

> Smooth life had flock and shepherd in old time,
> Long springs and tepid winters, on the banks
> Of delicate Galesus; and no less
> Those scattered along Adria's myrtle shores:
> Smooth life had herdsman, and his snow-white herd

[145] David Ferry, *The Limits of Mortality: An Essay on Wordsworth's Major Poems (*Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), 137.
[146] Lindenberger, 106.

To triumphs and to sacrificial rites
Devoted, on the inviolable stream
Of rich Clitumnus; and the goat-herd lived
As calmly, underneath the pleasant brows
Of cool Lucretilis, where the pipe was heard
Of Pan, Invisible God, thrilling the rocks
With tutelary music, from all harm
The fold protecting. I myself, mature
In manhood then, have seen a pastoral tract
Like one of these, where Fancy might run wild,
Though under skies less generous, less serene . . . . (173-88)

The names "Galesus," "Adria," "Clitumnus," and "Lucretillis" derive from Virgil's *Georgics* and Horace's *Odes*.[147] We note that the speaker is drawing a qualified comparison between what he has seen and tradition; however, he still enlists the aid of such names and their milieu to enhance his own description. In lines shortly below, he will again distinguish the shepherds he has known from

the gay Corin of the groves, who lives
For his own fancies, or to dance by the hour
In coronal, with Phyllis in the midst. (285-87)

Here he uses names common to the pastoral tradition.

Yet not all of Wordsworth's names and allusions in Book VIII are connected with the pastoral tradition. In the first passage quoted a length, he cites Shakespeare and Spenser by name. Toward the conclusion of the book, he alludes to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, XI, 203-7, when he describes his recovery after meditating on the "misery forced upon my sight" in London:[148]

Lo! every thing that was indeed divine
Retained its purity inviolate,
Nay, brighter shone, by this portentous gloom
Set off; such opposition as aroused
The mind of Adam, yet in Paradise

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[147] Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill, eds. *William Wordsworth: The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850*
*(*New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 282*n*.
[148] J. Wordsworth, et. al. 208*n*.

> Though fallen from bliss, when in the East he saw
> Darkness ere day's mid course, and morning light
> More orient in the western cloud, that drew
> O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
> Descending slow with something heavenly fraught. (655-64)

Earlier, when addressing the reaction to London in retrospect, he employs two less famous place names, suggesting that one, Yordas, derives from local legend. He compares his experience in London to entering

> some huge cave,
> The Grotto of Antiparos, or the Den
> In old time haunted by that Danish Witch,
> Yordas. (561-64).

It is important to emphasize that while Wordsworth names people and places from the past and literary tradition with new freedom and confidence in Book VIII, he also retains the kind of generic proper names seen previously in Books I-IV. He continues to rely on names like "Nature," "Man," and "God" as well as more abstract nouns like "Powers" and "Forms." When he does use an elevated device such as apostrophe, he tends to use it in combinations with common names of things:

> Yet, hail to you
> Moors, mountains, headlands, and ye hollow vales,
> Ye long deep channels for the Atlantic's voice,
> Powers of my native region! Ye that seize
> The heart with firmer grasp! Your snows and streams
> Ungovernable and your terrifying winds . . . . (215-20)

Also, Wordsworth is restrained in his use of local place names when depicting landscape alone. The name "Helvellyn" occurs three times and, later in the book, "Goslar" and "Hercynian," once each. He eliminated a fair number of local place names when he omitted the Matron's tale prior to the 1850 edition. The result of this kind of discretion is to give more impact to those central passages in VIII where a succession of person and place names establishes the poet's continuity with the past and with literary tradition.

Finally, we have suggested that Wordsworth's new attitude toward naming in Book VIII reflects a new sense of confidence in his own powers as a poet. In Books V and VI he deals with the problem of language when he discusses the lure that "words in tuneful order had for him, as "a passion and a power . . . For their own *sakes*" and tells how he came to prefer abstractions for a time when he felt himself to be "a better judge of thoughts than words" (106). Now in Book VIII he treats the problem of his development as a poet during that time when he was dominated by a tendency to personify everything seen:

> there came
> Among the simple shapes of human life
> A willfulness of fancy and conceit:
> And Nature and her objects beautified
> These fictions, as in some sort, in their turn,
> They burnished her. From touch of this new power
> Nothing was safe. (371-77)

In contrast to the practice in Books V and VI, however, Wordsworth emphasizes in VIII that this excess was something he was able to resolve: "'mid the fervent swarm / Of these vagaries . . . I had forms distinct / To steady me" (426-30). He even dramatizes a particular "spot of time" when the perfect language resulted from an experience. He was in the grove of Thurston-mere:

> Once—while, in that shade
> Loitering, I watched the golden beams of light
> Flung from the setting sun, as they reposed
> In silent beauty on the naked ridge
> Of a high eastern hill—thus flowed my thoughts
> In a pure stream of words fresh from the heart;
> Dear native Regions, wheresoe'er shall close
> My mortal course, there will I think on you . . . . (462-69)

Clearly Book VIII delineates on more than one level the recovery of the poet, a recovery of which he was in great need after the "catalogues" of Bartholomew Fair. His recovery and new sense of confidence in his powers are reflected in his willingness to use names from the past and from literary tradition without being intimidated by them or fearfully in awe of them. His recovery from the London

experience of VII is also seen in both his direct apostrophe to London, “Grave Teacher, stern Preceptress . . . London, to thee I willingly return” (530-32) and his explanation in Book VIII, that

> There I conversed with majesty and power
> Like independent natures. Hence the place
> Was thronged with impregnations like the Wilds
> In which my early feelings had been nursed . . . . (631-34)

III.

In the subsequent narratives of Books IX, X, and XI, the poet deals with the French Revolution, particularly with his initial idealism followed by his dismay and, finally, by his more mature understanding of human affairs. These narratives are characterized by a concern with the role of names and of language generally as vehicles of reality and truth in human history. Within these sections the poet appears from time to time to have gained a new sophistication regarding names and language, though it proves to be something he will occasionally lose sight of, to his own disappointment. Each of the books also reveals a pattern in which the poet finds a temporary basis for comfort and perspective regarding the events in France, only to discover that literary tradition is the true source of restoration and vision in these and other circumstances. In the first instance, Book IX suggests the value of historical examples such as those cited by the poet in describing his conversations with Michel Beaupuy who, himself is seen as the contemporary model for a man of action. However, the poet eventually turns, though reluctantly at first, it would seem, to literary associations and then to a literary tale as a vehicle for truth. In X, Wordsworth notes the unheroic nature of developments in France, and he emphasizes the irony that language and, particularly, names such as “Liberty” can be misrepresented and abused. He describes a visit to the grave of a former teacher where he comes to realize the restorative value of poetry in a climactic, epiphanic experience. His disillusionment in Book XI takes the form of skepticism toward speculative systems of thought where language can create possibilities without substance. However, his recollection of Coleridge’s travels in Sicily leads him to reflect on

individual classical poets, and it is their example which leads him to acknowledge, once again, the more viable truth of poetry. We will continue to focus on the individual books and relevant passages in the order in which they occur in the 1850 edition.[149]

Book IX contains an early catalogue of place names in Paris similar to that seen for London in Book VII:

> From the field of Mars
> Down to the suburbs of St. Antony,
> And from Mont Martyr southward to the Dome
> Of Genevieve. In both her clamorous Halls,
> The National Synod and the Jacobins,
> I saw the Reovlutionary Power
> Toss like a ship at anchor, rocked by storms;
> The Arcades I traversed, in the Palace huge
> Of Orleans; coasted round and round the line
> Of Tavern, Brothel, Gaming-house, and Shop,
> Great rendezvous of worst and best . . . . (45-55)

An important difference is that whatever interest the poet attached to these proper names, he does not present them as promising a magic that could not be realized on encounter, as he had done in the catalogue of famous features in London (VII, 126ff.). He suggests instead that he felt a certain aloofness to all he witnessed. Even when pocketing a stone from the Bastille, he admits,

> in honest truth,
> I looked for something that I could not find,
> Affecting more emotion than I felt. (71-73).

He acknowledges being more affected by a work of art, "the painted Magdalene of Le Brun"(77) than the current events which were the source of excitement for others.

Similarly, the poet displays a sophistication with regard to names on more philosophical level.

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[149] We will continue to treat the books in the sequence of the 1850 edition, aware of the evidence that Wordsworth composed Book IX and part of X before most of Book VIII which, in turn, was largely composed before Book VII (See Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams and Stephen Gill, eds. *William Wordsworth: The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850* (New York, W.W. Norton, 1979), 515*n*. It is known that Wordsworth frequently transferred earlier sections of material to later parts of the poem and that he often revised smaller sections of narration up until shortly before his death. This reality along with the fact that he did determine the existing order of books in the 1805 and 1850 editions should obviate the need to apologize for reading the text in its present sequence,

When he observes the events around him in the perspective of history, the notes the irony and deception of it all, and the pronounces an *ubi sunt* for two Girondist deputies, later executed:

> —Carra, Gorcas,—add
> A hundred other names, forgotten now,
> Nor to be heard of more; yet, they were powers
> Like earthquakes . . . . (176-79)

At the same time, the poet mentions a certain insecurity he felt as an Englishman among a French-speaking people, even though he could freely witness dialogues among defenders of the crown. He alludes to this position as he refers to the time spend in Blois,[150]

> An Englishman,
> Born in a land whose very name appeared
> To license some unruliness of mind;
> A stranger, with youth's further privilege,
> And the indulgence that a half-learnt speech
> Wins from the courteous . . . . (188-93)

It is soon clear that the poet is able to put little faith either in written history, "the historian's tale" (204), or what was being said around him, the "nice distinctions, then on every tongue, / Of natural rights and civil" (200-01). He puts his faith instead in the experience of a man of action with whom he held discourse.

Wordsworth successively alludes to Michel Beaupuy in the course of Book IX as "one hereafter to be named" (132), "Among that band of Officers . . . one / Already hinted at" (288-89) and, finally, after relating the nature of their dialogues, he pronounces his name as a memorial, "So Beaupuis (let the name / Stand near the worthiest of Antiquity) / Fashioned his life" (419-21).[151] The poet no doubt respects Beaupuy for this sensibility, but he emphasizes his involvement with real events, not his learning or eloquence, as his chief virtue. Addressing Coleridge, the poet mentions the "toil" of discourse with one like Beaupuy:

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[150] R. D. Havens, *The Mind of a Poet* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1941), 499.
[151] Wordsworth misspells his name in the text of the poem. See DeSelincourt, 588*n*.

> far more sweet such toil—
> Toil, say I, for it leads to thoughts abstruse—
> If nature then be standing on the brink
> Of some great trial, and we hear the voice
> Of one devoted, —one whom circumstance
> Hath called upon to embody his deep sense
> In action, give it outwardly a shape,
> And that of benediction, to the world. (396-403)

Thus Beaupuy's name becomes a memorial to action, one that dominates the latter half of Book IX in the 1850 edition. It is significant that the poet does cite names from ancient history, names of men who were both philosophers and men of action, to suggest the value and implications of his association with Beaupuy:

> Such conversation under Attic shades,
> Did Dion hold with Plato; ripened thus
> For a Deliverer's glorious task, —and such
> He, on that ministry already bound,
> Held with Eudemus and Timonides,
> Surrounded by adventurers in arms,
> When those two vessels with their daring freight,
> For the Sicilian Tyrant's overthrow,
> Sailed from Zacynthus,—philosophic war,
> Led by Philosophers. (408-17).

The poet in Book XI appears to have developed a new objectivity and sophistication regarding the ephemeral nature of names of contemporary fame. At the same time he cites names as historical examples in the effort to establish the significance of his own situation in the uncertain present. Ultimately, of course, the conversations with Beaupuy, even if they resembled Dion's with Plato, do not resolve anything for the poet or protect him from further disillusionment with France.

There is one section of Book XI where the kind of comfort found by the poet in names from specifically literary tradition in Book VIII, is suggested. Wordsworth includes a description of landscape along the Loire where he allowed his imagination to wander between dialogues with Beaupuy. Use of specific place names is characteristically spare, but the poet suggests that, to his imagination,

> if e'er was heard,—
> Heard, though unseen,—a devious traveler,
> Retiring or approaching from afar
> With speed and echoes loud of trampling hoofs
> From the hard floor reverberated, then
> It was Angelica thundering through the woods
> Upon her palfrey, or that gentle maid
> Erminia, fugitive as fair as she. (446-53)

The names of characters from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and *Geruslemme Liberata* respectively, imply an emphasis on the particular kind of comfort available in literature and art. At this point the comfort represents only a temporary escape from events. Closing references to the separate tale of Vaudracour and Julia, the narration of which had been included in 1805, reinforces the emphasis on the unique value of art. The speaker makes a point of the fact that he will forbear "stooping" to mention "public acts, / And public persons" (543-44) but that he will choose, instead, the vehicle of "a tale" told by his friend, to

> prove to what low depth had struck the roots,
> How widely spread the bough, of that old tree
> Which, as a deadly mischief and a foul
> And black dishonour, France was weary of. (549-52)

The fact that he exhorts the reader to go and read the tale for himself or herself, rather than presenting it in full in the 1850 text, does not deny the importance of his preference for literature as a vehicle of exposition.

The confidence the poet had placed in his talks with Beaupuy as a point of reference from which to view the events in France, however, does not prevent his further disillusionment and subsequent depression regarding the situation. This development can be seen in the narrative of Book X. David Ferry suggests that a sense of irony dominates the books on the revolution.[152] This is certainly true of the passage where the coalition armies, whose attack was frustrated, are compared to

[152] Ferry, 146ff.

> eastern hunters
> Banded beneath the Great Mogul, when he
> Erewhile went forth from Agra or Lahore,
> Rajahs and Omrahs in his train, intent
> To drive their prey enclosed within a ring
> Wide as a province, but, the signal given,
> Before the point of the life-threatening spear
> Had seen the anticipated quarry turned
> Into avengers, from whose wrath they fled
> In terror. (17-27)

Here Miltonic style, including a specific allusion to *Paradise Lost* (XI, 391), is used in a context that is clearly not heroic. A comparable degree of irony emerges when Wordsworth recreates Louvet's accusation of Robespierre in a passage that stands out for its drama. The speaker says he was walking toward "the Palace-walk" / Of Orleans" when he pursued a commotion in the "Arcades" (94-96). He heard voices bawling, "'Denunciation of the Crimes / Of Maximilian Robespierre'" (100-01). When Robespierre himself challenges the accusation, Louvet is said to have "walked single through the avenue . . . In silence of all present" and say, "'I Robespierre, accuse thee'"" (110-13). The presence of proper names in bold addresses directly quoted in the text, is emphatic. It reinforces the irony of the abortive accusation when the speaker tells how, in spite of support that was voiced beforehand, Louvet "Was left without a follower to discharge / His perilous duty" (117-18). The irony of the failed language is also accentuated by Miltonic diction here:

> He, who had launched the startling thunderbolt,
> The one bold man, whose voice the attack had sounded,
> Was left without a follower to discharge
> His perilous duty and retire lamenting
> That Heaven's best aid is wasted upon men
> Who to themselves are false. (115-20)

Jack Stillinger sees the reference to "the one bold man" as an echo of *Paradise Lost*, V, 901ff., where

Abdiel, following his speech to the fallen angels, is described as "single" in his loyalty.[153] In both this instance and the passage on the rebuff of the coalition armies, literary allusion serves to convey the irony with which the poet viewed events he had expected to be more heroic in their impact. These allusions do not constitute a direct appeal to literary tradition in the manner of the names cited in Book VIII, however, The echoes of diction and phraseology involved are subtle and are not intended to evoke the whole of a particular poet's achievement, in this case, Milton's. But literary tradition will remain an inviolable repository of truth and comfort for Wordsworth, as later sections of Books X and XI will show.

Even more than in Book IX, the poet in Book X states his disillusionment with events in France and with the reaction within his own country. He suggests, particularly, that the situation could best be understood in terms of a misrepresentation of or abuse of, names. England, in its militancy, was blind to what real pride and patriotism were, in Wordsworth's view. It was a time

> In which worst losses might easily wear
> The best of names . . .
> . . . a time
> In which apostasy from ancient faith
> Seemed but conversion to a higher creed. (304-10)[154]

Citing the Reign of terror in France, the poet notes the irony that such crimes could be committed in the name of Liberty:

> even thinking minds
> Forgot, at seasons, whence they had their being;
> Forgot that such a sound was ever heard
> As Liberty upon earth: yet all beneath
> Her innocent authority was wrought
> Nor could have been without her blessed name. (375-80)

In terms of the abuse of names, the poet does indicate that he developed a certain maturity and perspective in the course of Book X. He describes the town of Arras which he immediately

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[153]Jack Stillinger, ed., *William Wordsworth: Selected Poems and Prefaces* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 560*n*.
[154] DeSelincourt notes that, though the 1850 text has "wean" rather than "wear" in line 304, the latter is the correct reading. See the DeSelincourt edition, 597*n.*

associates with

> *that* Robespierre,
> He who thereafter, and in how short of time!
> Wielded the scepter of the Atheist crew. (500-502)

But Wordsworth catches himself and notes the irony of the fact that he identified Arras exclusively with Robespierre and "could almost / Have quarreled with that blameless spectacle" (507-8).

With a similar emphasis, a passage just prior to the one above depicts scoffers saying, "'Behold the harvest that we reap / From popular government and equality'" (472-73). The poet reveals his own greater sophistication, however, when he says, with regard to the latter terms,

> I clearly saw that neither these nor aught
> Of wild belief engrafted on their names
> By false philosophy had caused the woe,
> But a terrific reservoir of guilt
> And ignorance filled up from age to age . . . . (474-78)

In Book X Wordsworth also signifies his recovery from despair by acknowledging his bond with literary tradition. We know that the poet's own sense of despair had been considerable during the time described in Book X. He earlier depicts himself pleading "long orations" before "unjust tribunals—with a voice / Labouring, a brain confounded . . . . " until he felt treachery "In the last place of refuge—my own soul" (411-15). However, the occasion of a graveyard visit and the memory of his former teacher now encourage a more positive perspective.

The visit to Taylor's grave that follows is interesting as a "spot of time" because it involves a specific reference to Gray's "Elegy" and also suggests the mystical dimension of words themselves. With dramatic focus the narrator recounts how the image of the lines from the "Elegy" "graven" on the stone, along with the sight of the turf, caused him to recall Taylor's own dying words: "My head will soon lie low": "those words, / With sound of voice and countenance of the Man, / Came back upon me" (539-43). The immediate effect for Wordsworth was one of sorrow, but as he gains some distance in time and space, he associates "tender pleasure" with "the verses graven / Upon the tombstone" (546-

47). The narrator concludes by restating his own inner dialogue, recollected in tranquility: "whispering to myself: / He loved the Poets, and . . . Would have loved me" since "I, at his command, / Began to spin, with toil, my earliest songs" (547-52).

This acknowledgement of his continuity with tradition through the recollection of his teacher and the reference to "the churchyard elegy of Gray" (536) clearly signals the poet's recovery. Subsequent lines portray his jubilant response to the news of Robespierre's death as he "pours" forth his "hymn of triumph": "'Come now, ye golden times'" (578-80).

As with Books IX and X, XI repeats the structure in which the poet experiences disillusionment and despair before he can come to terms with what is occurring in France. He begins by describing his enthusiastic idealism when the reign of terror had ceased and "Authority in France" had "Put on a milder face" (1-2). To be a contemporary of those events was uplifting, he feels. It was a time

> When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights
> When most intent on making of herself
> A prime enchantress—to assist the work,
> Which then was going forward in her name ! (113-16)

When Britain declares war on France, however, and when the French react by seeking more territory for themselves, the poet responds with dismay. He criticizes, particularly, some of the philosophies that became popular, "speculative schemes," that purported "to abstract the hopes of Man / Out of his feelings" (224-25): presumably he has Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* in mind. The point, however, is Wordsworth's emphasis that language as a medium is vulnerable where systems of thought can be constructed that yet are not justified by experience. He expresses the same idea another way with the observation that such speculative systems are:

> Tempting region *that*
> For Zeal to enter and refresh herself,
> Where passions had the privilege to work,
> And never hear the sound of their own names. (228-31).

The implication is that the simple names of things are less likely to misrepresent their meaning, while

language in the service of lengthy induction is liable to deceive.

This skepticism revealed by the narrator with regard to systems of thought and logic itself emerges elsewhere in Book XI. Wordsworth describes the lowest point to which he came in his confusion about events in France with the statement that he was "Dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims, creeds, / Like culprits to the bar" (294-95). He even went so far as to call the mind itself to "establish . . . Her titles and her honours,"

> till, demanding formal *proof,*
> And seeking it in every thing, I lost
> All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
> Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
> Yielded up moral questions in despair. (301-05).

Such skepticism, regarding language and thought itself leaves the narrator in a position where his recovery in Book XI is even harder to anticipate than previously. He makes a point of the fact, merely, that he did not associated with "scoffers" (322) nor indulge in cynical comments. At one point he addresses Coleridge to express the wish that he could employ the vehicle of "some dramatic tale, endued with shapes / Livelier, and flinging out less guarded words" to communicate his experiences (283-84). However, it is in another address to his friend that the speaker's movement toward recovery is most clearly indicated. He reminds his friend of the constancy of his own purpose in the poem, saying he has "faithfully retraced / The perturbations of a youthful mind" (372-73). More importantly, he notes that Coleridge is now

> Where Etna, over hill and valley, casts
> His shadow stretching towards Syracuse,
> The city of Timoleon! Righteous Heaven!
> How are the mighted prostrated! (377-80)

Here the place names lead the speaker to a historical example of *de casibus*, Timoleon (according to Plutarch's *Lives*) having driven a tyrant out of Sicily.[155] Shortly afterward, the poet apostrophizes the place names associated with Coleridge's journey to show his gratitude for his friend:

> Oh! wrap him in your shades, ye giant woods,
> On Etna's side; and though, O flowery field
> Of Enna! is there not some nook of thine,
> From the first play-time of the infant world
> Kept sacred to restorative delight,
> When from afar invoked by anxious love? (418-23)

Not unexpectedly, the place names in Sicily also remind Wordsworth of classical poetry, and he focuses On the names of "Empedoces," " Archimedes," and "Theocritus" as memorials in literary tradition where He can discover the kind of comfort that has characterized his recovery from confusion from Book VIII on:

> Nor can my tongue give utterance to a name
> Of note belonging to that honoured isle,
> Philosopher or Bard, Empedocles,
> Or Archimedes, pure abstracted soul!
> That doth not yield a solace to my grief:
> And, O Theocritus, so far have some
> Prevailed among the powers of heaven and earth,
> By their endowments, good or great, that they
> Have had, as thou reportest, miracles 440
> Wrought for them in old time; yea, not unmoved,
> When thinking on my own beloved friend,
> I hear thee tell how bees with honey fed
> Divine Comates, by his impious lord
> Within a chest imprisoned; how they came
> Laden from blooming grove or flowery field,
> And fed him there, alive, month after month,
> Because the goatherd, blessed man! had lips
> Wet with the Muses' nectar. (432-49)

[155] J. Wordsworth, et. al. 410*n.*

Here the name of Empedocles is a "memorial" of philosophy wed to poetry, while Theocritus is a poet-historian, since he "reports" the miracle of the bees feeding Comates. This legend, too, as contained in Theocritus' poetry (*Idyl*, VII),[156] is a source of inspiration and artistic excellence: the "blessed man" had "lips / Wet with the Muses' nectar."

Book XI concludes with the important observation that, just as the narrator has been fortified by associations evoked by the names of Empedocles, Theocritus and Comates, so Coleridge can be inspired by thoughts associated with "Arethuse" since he can visit it as did the ancient poets. More importantly, even if Coleridge sees only a spring that looks like Arethuse, his own preestablished receptiveness to the name itself—to its inherent tie to literary tradition—will have the same effect:

> . . . if that fountain be in truth no more,
> Then, near some other spring, which, by the name
> Thou gratulatest, willingly deceived,
> I see thee linger a glad votary. (466-69).

The skepticism Wordsworth discovers toward language as a medium for analytical systems of thought in Book XI leads him once again to find comfort in literary tradition as memorialized in the names of specific poets. It is clear also from his focus on Empedocles and Theocritus in this book, that Wordsworth sees poetry as encompassing the realms of philosophy and history.

IV.

Book XII, XIII, and XIV with which *The Prelude* in 1850 concludes are chiefly of interest for the progressive confidence which the poet declares in his mission and in his subject. Both XII and XIII offer a transition from the books on France since Wordsworth addresses himself again to the deceptiveness of names as well as the fallibility of systems of thought before he asserts and

[156] J. Wordsworth, et. al. 414*n.*

illustrates the kind of poetry that will be his. Book XIV is both formal and predictable as a conclusion to the work. It provides the speaker with an opportunity for a characteristic pledge of integrity regarding his own purpose in the poem and for several declarations of tribute. Book XII is presented as a return to the subject of the imagination, and the poet begins in a buoyant mood with a succession of apostrophes to the common names of natural features:

> Ye motions of delight, that haunt the sides
> Of the green hills; ye breezes and soft airs . . .
> . . . ye who, as if to show
> The wondrous influence of power gently used,
> Bend the complying heads of lordly pines . . .
> . . . ye brooks,
> Muttering along the stones . . .
> Ye waves, that out of the great deep steal forth
> In a calm hour to kiss the pebbly shore . . .
> And you, ye groves . . .
> Oh, that I had a music and a voice
> Harmonious as your own, that I might tell
> What ye have done for me. (9-31)

Wordsworth's echo of the *Benedicte omnia opera* from the *Book of Common Prayer* and the Anglican liturgy has earlier been mentioned ("Oh all ye works of the Lord, Bless ye the Lord"). But we recognize here the same language of assertion used by Wordsworth in the early half of *The Prelude* to signal his recovery from disheartenment. We can cite, particularly, the latter parts of Books I and II and the addresses to Locarno and Como in VI. His use of what has been called the "topos of inexpressibility," in lines 30-31 is not a concession to the weakness of words but rather a conventional gesture of emphasis.

Wordsworth's recovery from disheartenment in Book XII does represent a greater and more complex achievement than what was seen in the poem's first half, however. This stance is apparent as

the poet recapitulates some of the themes from the previous books on France. Chief among these is the unreliability of language in the service of logic and theory. Here the poet describes a lingering pessimism regarding human nature that dates from his observation of the French Revolution. In Books X and XI he had portrayed his own conflict about what he saw in terms of "pleading long orations before unjust tribunals" (X, 411-13) and "dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims and creeds, / Like culprits to the bar"(XI, 294-95). In XII he notes that in warring against himself he could "unsoul . . . by syllogistic words / Those very mysteries of being" that make "Of the human race one brotherhood"(83-87). There is a sense that he feels slightly guilty, even now, for participation in this kind of exercise, and he twice apostrophizes the "Soul of Nature" (93, 102) in the stanza that follows. At another point, he notes, with the device of paralipsis, that he could develop his argument at further length, but will not:

> Gladly here,
> Entering upon abstruser argument,
> Could I endeavour to unfold the means
> Which Nature studiously employs to thwart
> This tyranny, summons all the senses each
> To counteract the other, and themselves . . .
> But leave we this . . . . (131-40)

The poet prefers not to rely on this form of expository analysis, as though to reinforce his distrust of "syllogistic words." Thus he proceeds to depict the famous landscape episodes referred to as "spots of time" (XIV, 208) in the remainder of the book. Wordsworth is suggesting that, for him, the kind of poetry in the spots-of-time passages comes closest to explaining his relationship to nature—not philosophic argument.

There is one section in the "spots of time" passage in XII that has been the subject of much

speculation. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch sees the image of the murderer's carved name, in the scene with the gibbet mast on the desert moor, as just one instance of "the inscriptional metaphor" as a "minor motif" in Wordsworth. He points out that Wordsworth often used images of inscriptions and monuments as a metaphor for poetry itself.[157] Jim Springer Borck emphasizes the fact that the name is never given but that the image remains as only "monumental letters" (241) though still "fresh and visible" (245). For Borck, the image is an emblem of Wordsworth's view of language, specifically, of the limits of the written words in attempting to convey experience.[158] Finally, Thomas Weiskel argues that the climactic occurrence of this vague and suggestive image of an unspecified word at the site of the execution leads one to the equation that "writing = death," or, rather, that the recognition of the writing "equals" the intimation of death.[159]

Yet, when we examine the image of the unspecified name in the context of the rest of *The Prelude*, its relationship to the many names on signs and advertisements that presented themselves to the poet's view in London can be seen. There the poet also describes carved words next to a recumbent sailor, and a sign, also unspecified, pinned to a blind beggar. Of the latter he remarks,

> Caught by the spectacle my mind turned round
> As with the might of waters; an apt type
> This label seemed of the utmost we can know,
> Both of ourselves and of the universe. (VII, 643-46.

Here the written words are clearly an emblem of the ontological mystery of all the crowd of objects and figures he has seen in London. In the murderer's- gibbet scene in XII, the poet is also responding to a sequence of details and impressions; and I think we must regard the carved

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[157] Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch, "Wordsworth: The Monumental Poet," *Philological Quarterly*, 44 (1965), 509, 512.
[158] Jim Springer Borck, "Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and the Failure of Language," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 13 (1973), 607-09.
[159] Thomas Weiskel, "Wordsworth and the Defile of the Word," *Georgia Review*, 29 (1975), 159-61.

name (or initials) as objectifying an epiphany, though on a more subjective level than the ones illustrated from Book VII. In any case, Wordsworth's interest in visualized but unspecified words and names as images in this manner implies his concern with the ontological mystery and names which have a visual dimension and character in their own right, but which function as symbols. It is an interest which underlies Wordsworth's self-conscious demeanor toward names in a number of other poems, but which especially central to *The Prelude.*

Like Book XII, Book XIII begins on a positive, assertive note. The poet, who has taken many occasions throughout the narrative to justify or apologize for what he was going to say, here makes an exceptional point of his right to claim his identity as a poet:

> . . . 'tis mine
> To speak, what I myself have known and felt;
> Smooth task! for words find easy way, inspired
> By gratitude, and confidence in truth. (12-15).

Here the implication of the potential of language when the poet's subject is worthy, is a useful corrective for those who would emphasize the "failure" of language as a motif in Wordsworth's poetry.

The distaste for theory and systems of thought that appeared in Book XII is also seen again in the contempt the poet voices for "that idol proudly named 'The Wealth of Nations.'" He prefers instead

> A more judicious knowledge of the worth
> And dignity of individual man,
> No composition of the brain, but man
> Of whom we read, the man whom we behold
> With our own eyes. (80-84).

Wordsworth also goes out of his way to speak derogatorily of history in Book XIII when he mentions seeing

little worthy or sublime
In what the Historian's pen so much delights
To blazon—power and energy detached
From moral purpose. (41-44)

This had been a recurrent emphasis in the narratives on France. In Book IX the speaker sees modern history as a "mockery" since names like Carra and Gorcas that were "powers / Like Earthquakes" one day could be forgotten the next, "not to be heard of more" (176-80). In Book X he looked to history to find some reason why events developed the way they did in France. There he cites the names "Harmodius," "Aristogiton," Athenian tyrannicides, and "Brutus," as historical examples of the fact "that tyrannic power is weak" (198-200). But historical examples serve merely to confirm the inevitable outcome of events and cannot be said to offer solace or comfort in the manner that the recollection of his teacher and the lines from Gray's "Elegy," cited later in the book, can do. The same is true when he names "The city of Timoleon" in Book XI as the example of a city which drove out a tyrant (Dionysius the Younger in 343 B.C.E.).[160] Examples of ancient heroes represent what should have been done, in Wordsworth's view, but not what was accomplished in the case of France. The poet finds comfort, rather, in the examples of ancient poets that Coleridge's journey to Sicily recalls to his attention.

Along with his deprecation of the value of both history and speculative theory by themselves, in Book XIII the speaker also refers to the worthlessness of talk in the sense of the kind of discussions he witnessed in France among partisans. He has come to realize "how vain / A correspondence with the talking world / Proves to the most"(172-74). In contrast to the would-be intellectuals he heard discussing politics in France, with the "nice distinctions then on every tongue," he values what

[160] J. Wordsworth et. al. 410*n*.

he hears walking through his native countryside:

> From the mouths of men obscure and lowly, truths
> Replete with honour; sounds in unison
> With loftiest promises of good and fair. (183-85)

Wordsworth proclaims his subject in these passages in an indirect and somewhat defensive manner. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of his apologetic narrative intrusions throughout the poem is to reinforce the confidence he now claims to have in his theme. Thus he mentions men in "the familiar circuit of my home" who sometimes appear "outwardly" to be rude, and claims

> Of these . . . shall be my song; of these . . .
> Will I record the praises, making verse
> Deal boldly with substantial things; in truth
> And sanctity of passion, speak of these . . .
> —my theme
> No other than the very heart of man,
> As found among the best of those who live,
> Not unexalted by religious faith,
> Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few,
> In Nature's presence. (232-45)

As in earlier sections of the poem, the speaker seems conscious of the fact that he is naming no names of famous men or places but is treating common men, "men as they are men within themselves"(226). His subject would not customarily be considered heroic, yet he claims, "it shall be my pride / That I have dared to tread this holy ground, / Speaking no dream, but things oracular" (251-53).

He is confident, as well, that his subject will be of serious interest to the most skilled and learned men,

> Matter not lightly to be heard by those
> Who to the letter of the outward promise
> Do read the invisible soul; by men adroit
> In speech, and for communion with the world
> Accomplished . . . . (254-58).

The climactic self-assuredness revealed by the poet in connection with his proclaimed mission creates a mood which explains the import of the "spot of time" with the vision of his ancestral past. Wordsworth conjures up the vision by calling on Darkness:

> I called on Darkness—but before the word
> Was uttered, midnight darkness seemed to take
> All objects from my sight; and lo! Again
> The Desert visible by dismal flames . . . . (327-30)

Particularly the images cited of the "circles, lines, or mounds, / That yet survive, a work, as some Divine, / Shaped by the Druids . . . . " and subsequently, the "long-bearded teachers . . . pointing to the starry sky" (338-40; 345-46) suggest a reference to artistic heritage on its most primitive level. The poet's avowed confidence in his mission establishes for him a genuine bond with tradition and the past, not just a superficial tie such as imitation of style would constitute. As a poet of this order he demonstrates the power of the elemental speech-act of naming, when he calls on Darkness, a gesture that dramatizes his brotherhood with the most ancient of poets. It is also significant that in the subsequent verse paragraph, he calls on his friend, Coleridge, and, in a manner more characteristic, cites the latter's praise of his work as a testimony of the value of the poem at hand:

> I may not speak
> Thus wrongfully of verse, however rude,
> Which on thy young imagination, trained
> In the great City, broke like light from far. (362-65)

Book XIV, the conclusion of the 1850 *Prelude,* contains the most elaborate examples of Wordsworth's claims of constancy, or "eusthatia" in classical rhetoric. In light of the confidence about his projected poem that was climactically asserted in XIII, these claims seem unexpected here, though as Chapter III of this study has shown, it is characteristic of the self-conscious garrulity of the

epistolary mode employed throughout the poem. The passage does make a subordinate point of an assurance deriving from the "truth" of his subject. "Yet," he says,

> Do I declare—in accents which, from truth
> Deriving cheerful confidence, shall blend
> Their modulation with these vocal streams—
> That, whatsoever falls my better mind,
> Revolving with the accidents of life
> May have sustained, that, howsoe'er misled,
> Never did I, in quest of right and wrong,
> Tamper with conscience from a private aim;
> Nor was in any public hope the dupe
> Of selfish passions; nor did ever yield
> Willfully to mean cares or low pursuits . . . . (144-54)

With regard to Wordsworth's use of names or naming, however, the concluding book is anti-climactic. The description of the ascent of Snowden is as restrained in the use of proper names as were Books I and II. With the exception of the first short stanza, emphasis is on such common names as "Moon," "Nature," "Soul," and "Powers." In one place later in the narrative, Wordsworth does make a point about the term "imagination," a point which has been implicit throughout most of the poem:

> Imagination . . . in truth,
> Is but another name for absolute power
> And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And Reason in her most exalted mood. (189-92)

Back in Book VI he had said it was a "Power . . . so called / Through sad incompetence of human speech: (592-93). In either case the poet touches on the basis for his restrained and quietistic demeanor toward names throughout the poem. He recognizes that any name is subject to changing connotations and associations. As he observes in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800:

> I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that consequently, giving to things a false importance, sometimes from diseased impulses, I may have written on unworthy subjects, but I am less apprehensive

> on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words and phrases from which no man can altogether protect himself.[161]

Given the importance of his novel subject in *The Prelude*, a subject that he maintains is heroic in its own right, his caution and quietism even in the use of a generic term like "imagination" is understandable.

Book XIV concludes with a more conventional use of names as Wordsworth pays tribute to such individuals as his "Sister" whose influence had a calming, softening effect on his early apprehension of love and beauty (237 ff.); to Coleridge whom he addresses, "O capacious Soul!" (277) and asks, "With such a theme . . . with this my argument, of thee / Shall I be silent?"(276-77); and to Calvert: "A youth—(he bore the name of Calvert—it shall live, if words / Of mine can give it life)" (354-56). As is appropriate, his tribute to Coleridge is the most elaborate, and at one point he uses a number of names from his and Coleridge's work with the figure of anamnesis, or the calling to remembrance of things past:

> That summer, under whose indulgent skies,
> Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved . . .
> Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart
> Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,
> The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
> Didst utter of the Lady Christabel;
> And I, associate with such labour, steeped
> In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours
> Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was found
> After the perils of his moonlight ride,
> Near the loud waterfall; or her who sate
> In misery near the miserable Thorn. (395-407).

[161] Owen, 87.

It is fitting, perhaps, that names from the poet's own works and those of his friend, function as a source of comfort and assurance, much as names from older poetic tradition had done in Book VIII, X, and XI. Having included a brief catalogue of their own creations, the poet claims as he addresses Coleridge, still in an elegiac tone,

> To thee, in memory of that happiness
> It will be known by thee at least, my Friend!
> Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind
> Is labour not unworthy of regard;
> To thee the work will justify itself. (410-14)

V.

Wordsworth's practice with regard to names in *The Prelude* and his statements on the reliability of words and names in different situations, provide new insight into the thematic and stylistic nature of the poem. Prior to Book VI, the speaker's demeanor toward names is what can only be called quietistic. The landscape experiences of I, II, part of III, and IV are characterized by spareness in the use of specific person and place names. The burden of Wordsworth's statements about nature is carried by a variety of terms such as "Forms," "Being," "Spirit," "Powers," "Soul," and, of course, "Nature." But such generic and abstract terms occur in combination or are successively interchanged with each other so that on one term becomes undesirably dominant. Even the apostrophes which occur strategically as a language of assertion throughout the poem, are addressed to nouns that represent the common names of things such as mountains, winds, lakes, and the like. Such a demeanor toward names is noteworthy in a poet who knew the value of concrete images and names, as the poems of 1807 illustrate.

In the earliest books of *The Prelude* this demeanor reinforces the quietism that is important on the thematic level as well, since Wordsworth is describing landscape experiences in his youth that were solitary and uninhibited. Even his first encounter with Cambridge and the University, which represents what he calls, "the limbs of the great world," does not really penetrate the poet's somewhat solipsistic preoccupation with beauty and nature. The brevity of his description of Cambridge, where the few proper nouns that do occur are not emphasized, strengthens this view. Where he does cite the names of Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton on one occasion, he mentions them as animate forces in a landscape setting and makes no effort to elaborate on his debt to their works.

Book VI allegedly addresses the poet's debt to books, but to everyone's surprise, Wordsworth eschews specific reference to the major poets and concentrates on the role of imaginative literature in childhood, mentioning such works as *Jack-the-Giant-killer*. Consequently, his demeanor toward names here is quietistic in a manner anticipated by the subject. What is particularly significant, however, is that Wordsworth introduces the sub-theme, we may call it, of his own orientation to words and language in this book. He relates that initially he was lured by colorful, suggestive imagery in a way that made him insecure in his own practice as a writer. This theme is further developed in Book VI where he tells us that he went so far as to prefer abstractions, with "a mind beset / With images, and haunted by herself"(159-60).

The poet's own insecurity with words as portrayed in V and VI is clearly related to what we have described as the restraint and quietism of his practice in the narration of the poem's first half. In Book VI Wordsworth includes an incident that dramatizes the cleavage between what names suggest in themselves and what they denote in experience. Hence the poet ecounters Mont Blanc for the first

time and “grieved / To have a soulless image on the eye” that did not live up to what he had imagined with the name. Book VII is likewise concerned with the irony that words are “Licensed to bring the meaning that we love” though their referents often disappoint on encounter. Book VII stands apart from the rest of *The Prelude* for its many catalogues and list of names to describe London. The quietistic demeanor toward names exemplified in previous books renders the account of London climactic by contrast. As the catalogue of aberrant and grotesque sights in Bartholomew Fair suggests, London represents a night-journey experience for the poet, an encounter with the *nicht-sich* objectified by a succession of many and variegated names.

When the poet does return to landscape in Book VIII for an expected recovery, an important change has clearly occurred. As he relates the various sights and sounds in his native landscape, he freely includes names of characters and poets from earlier works in the pastoral mode. The confidence thus exhibited in his willingness to assert his relationship to poetic tradition by drawing on specific names is concomitant with the evidence that he has resolved his own insecurity regarding poetic imagery. He recounts a spot of time where the perfect language results from the experience, “thus flowed my thoughts / In a pure stream of words fresh from the heart” (467-68). Thus by the end of VIII, Wordsworth has resolved the dilemma about names and language in his own poetry.

In the ensuing books on France, he confronts the issue of the function of names and language in human affairs. Each of the narratives on France , Book IX, X, and XI, shows the poet experiencing initial enthusiasm followed by disillusionment resulting from the course of events, but with an ultimate recovery. Book IX portrays him putting faith in his dialogue with a man of action, one actually participating in the events described, Michel Beaupuy. Wordsworth admires Beaupuy and seeks to

memorialize his name, but as Book X and XI indicate, he realizes his calling as a poet and cannot hope to emulate Beaupuy himself. During his skepticism and despair in Book X, the poet recognizes that his only real source of comfort can be from examples from literary tradition. The visit to the grave of his former teacher reminds him of Gray's churchyard Elegy, lines from which are engraved on the tombstone. In this "spot of time,"(which also illustrates the theme of the mystery of words), he accepts his vocation as poet. In Book XI his recovery from disillusionment with political events is signified by reflection on the names of pastoral poets in Sicily, specifically, Empedocles and Theocritus. In addition to demonstrating his bond with literary tradition as a true source of comfort in Books IX, X, and XI, Wordsworth's interest in names and words as a theme leads him to discover that names in history are ephemeral, that talk with most men is worthless, and that language in the service of theories or systems of thought, by themselves, can deceive. In the wake of these recognitions he pronounces what the scope and subject of his own poem will be, well aware that it would not be considered heroic in the conventional sense. His conviction of the worthiness of his subject, nevertheless, leads him to express new confidence in himself and his mission, a confidence that is foregrounded, by contrast, with the apologetic voice of the narrator throughout.

From what is illustrated by Wordsworth's practice with regard to names and naming and his addressing of words and language as a theme in *The Prelude,* we can see that the poet has mastered two objectives in the development necessary to maturity as a poet. The poet must come to terms with language itself as his medium, and Wordsworth indicates that he has done this by the end of Book VIII. One must also come to terms with language in human affairs: Wordsworth thus examines the value of talk itself, of history, and of philosophic theory in his books on France before

he can accept with confidence, his role as a writer and a poet.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In a recent article Geoffrey Hartman refers to "the naturalism of elemental speech-acts of wishing, blessing, naming" that characterize Wordsworth's style, early or late." [162] We have maintained that naming and the use of names in Wordsworth is a topic that warrants investigation on its own merit, and one thing that is certainly clear from this study is that the subject of language in Wordsworth's poetry is necessarily complex and discourages patent conclusions about the relative success or failure, adequacy or inadequacy of language in his work.

Naming is clearly central in the poems we have considered as both an interest and a technique. Our examination of the poems "On the Naming of Places" as well as others published, for the most part, before 1807, reveals a structure in which an act of name bestowal succeeds a visionary moment in landscape and functions as a paradigm for the "greeting of the Spirit" that occurs in such encounters.[163] In some cases the name bestowed appears in upper case letters as a kind of visual foregrounding for the image.

Wordsworth's early narratives such as "The Idiot Boy" and "The Thorn" show the poet using strategic repetition of the simple prose names, "the Idiot Boy" and "the Thorn" in such manner that the names accumulate a series of emotional associations in the course of the narration. Wordsworth later admitted that he had misjudged the type of connotations the name "idiot boy" would have for most readers.[164] Name bestowal is not the focal action in most of the narrative poems; however, references to naming are emphasized and do take on a certain thematic weight. In "Michael," for

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[162] Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Blessing the Torrent: On Wordsworth's Later Style," *PMLA* 93 (1978), 200.
[163] Cf. Keats' "Letter to Benjamin Bailey, Mar. 13, 1818, in *John Keats: Complete Poems and Selected Letters*, ed. Clarence DeWitt Thorpe (New York: Odyssey Press, 1935), 548.
[164] Cf. the letter to John Wilson, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years 1787-1805*, ed. Ernest De Selincourt, rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) 352-58.

for example, the narrator makes a point of how "THE CLIPPING TREE" received its name, and he emphasizes "The Cottage which was named THE EVENING STAR" (476) which became a "public symbol" of the regular life of Michael and his wife. Part of the importance assumed by these and other names in the poem, as well as by references to the act of naming, derives from Wordsworth's use of point of view. In "Michael," and also, to some extent, in "The Idiot Boy," "The Thorn," and "Hart-Leap Well," the narrator apologizes for his own narration, implying that he knows his language is only approaching the impact of the events he is attempting to describe. He calls his poem "a history / Homely and rude" in "Michael" and suggests that language is only an obstacle to what he has to communicate: "Why should I relate / That objects that the Shepherd loved before / Were dearer now?" (198-200). The effect of this apologetic demeanor towards his own narration is to transfer impact to the proper names that do occur in the text as well as to designations of the act of naming.

Wordsworth uses proper names and point of view in *The Waggoner* to illustrate in a humorously ironic fashion the vulnerability of words and names to the emotional state of the user. Benjamin the Wagonner is portrayed before and after his revels at The Cherry Tree; and the noticeable increase of personified names to describe the landscape on his homeward journey objectifies the heightened activity of his fancy. Self-conscious statements by the narrator regarding his poem also reinforce the impact of proper names employed.

Peter Bell is the most complex of the narrative poems considered, and it reveals more explicitly the beginnings of an interest in language as a theme. As with the other poems, the voice of the narrator is quite apparent through various asides, exclamations, and anecdotes. As a result of the fictional prologue that precedes the narrative about Peter Bell, it assumes a moral overtone which, in turn, is applied to language since Peter Bell is characterized by his lack of reverence for the names of things:

> A primrose by the river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more. (248-50)

Peter is also known for his indifference to vows and promises since he deserted his betrothed.

Significantly, the conversion that occurs in the poem, where threatening, inarticulate sounds are succeeded by Peter's child screaming, "My Father!" is preceded by an anecdote from the narrator who describes a "gentle Soul," who, in the course of reading, confronts a word formed mysteriously on the page before him, a "ghostly word" that haunts him "to his dying day." This image of an undesignated but powerful "word" does not appear to be integrally related to the milieu of this poem, but it demonstrates an interest in the ontological mystery of words that reappears in *The Prelude*, notably in Book VII and the murderer's gibbet scene in Book XII, along with the general treatment of names in a moral frame of reference.

Roger Murray has said with regard to "Michael," that its "theme . . . is ultimately indistinct from its language."[165] In the same way, it is impossible to discuss names and naming in *The Prelude* apart from theme. In Chapter III of this study we suggested that the narrator's voice in *The Prelude* is complex and pervasive in a way that literary precedent, including Milton, does not anticipate. The persona's use of the figures of doubt, self-correction, anticipating objections and others, creates an apologetic, self-effacing voice that recalls the point of view in "Hart-Leap Well" and "Michael" but that goes far beyond it. Particularly the speaker's expressed doubts about his medium of language and his own abilities, reinforce, by contrast, those passages where naming comes to signify his recovery from skepticism and his acknowledgement of a bond with literary tradition.

The most emphatic use of naming in *The Prelude* occurs in the form of apostrophes and catalogues and lists. Both devices characterize the style of epic narrative and contrast to the less formal "middle style" or epistolary mode of the poem. When names occur in other apostrophes and

[165] Roger N. Murray, *Wordsworth's Style: Figures and Themes in the "Lyrical Ballads " of 1800* (Lincoln; University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 72.

lists, they call attention to themselves and assume thematic significance.

The close connection between names and theme in *The Prelude* is apparent in what we have described as an unfolding drama in which the poet comes to terms with language as his medium and with the role of language in politics and history. Early passages of *The Prelude* reveal a restrained or what we call a quietistic demeanor toward proper names, the poet preferring personified abstractions and generic nouns to designate the objects of his gratitude in nature. This gesture is significant when one considers Wordsworth's particular sensitivity to the value of concrete images in his rustic poems. Even the apostrophes that signify his recovery from disheartenment toward the end of Books I, II, and IV are to "Nature," "Powers," "Being," or "Wisdom and Spirit of the universe," names that are restrained in their lack of concreteness and that reinforce the quietism of the settings depicted. The books that ostensibly treat Wordsworth's debt to literature and learning are likewise restrained with regard to proper names. They show the poet anxious to return to landscape in almost every case. However, Book VII on London stands out from the text for its many lists of proper names: and it is here that the poet comes to realize the gap between what names promise and what they bring. Toward the end of the London experience, the poet is clearly overwhelmed by the unrelated sights and sounds of the city, as the mixed, asyntactic catalogue of names from Bartholomew Fair suggests. The return to landscape in Book VIII promises his restoration and recovery; however, this time his recovery is indicated not by apostrophes to abstract powers but by his willingness to cite proper names from literary tradition. His ability to name without inhibition in this book goes hand in hand with evidence that he has resolved his own insecurity regarding suggestive words in poetry, an insecurity he had described in Books V and VI. This sense of confidence regarding his relationship to language as a poet leaves him free to consider the role of language in politics and human history.

In Books IX, X, and XI where he deals with the French Revolution, the poet discovers the limited staying power of names in current history, the worthlessness of talk with most men, and the ability of language to deceive in the service of abstract systems of thought. He also becomes aware of the vulnerability of names such as "Liberty" to exploitation by those who serve their own interests. Wordsworth indicates his recovery from the skepticism he describes in these books with, once again, names and associations from literary tradition that reinforce his confidence in his mission as a poet. As a final indication of his new-found alacrity and confidence in his plans for future poems, he addresses Coleridge in Book XIV and cites names of characters from each of their poetic works.

By the end of *The Prelude*, it is apparent that naming transcends the function of a mere figure of speech or rhetorical device in the usual sense. Naming thus eludes conventional terminology in the manner that Geoffrey Hartman and Roger Murray have indicated for other features of Wordsworth's style.[166] Wordsworth uses common and generic names with a sense of their unique suitability, almost as if he were consciously reacting to the epithets and periphrases of poetic diction, as Bowman Wiley has noted.[167] Naming yet appears to be inseparable from theme in such climactic sections of the poem as Book VII and Book VIII, where the poet's eventual willingness to cite names from tradition objectifies his resolution and recovery from doubt.

For Wordsworth, who as a critic, was extremely conscious of the dangers of a "mechanical adoption of . . . figures of speech,"[168] naming is clearly a positive gesture as well as an act of assertion in his poetry. It is a gesture whose archetypal weight can be seen to derive from the creation story

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[166] Murray, 37; Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1964), 66.

[167] Bowman G. Wiley, *The Clear Sysnthesis: A Study of Wordworth's Stylistic Development as a Descriptive Poet from 1793-1808*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature under the direction of Prof. Erwin A. Stürzl, No. 16 (1974), 139.

[168] Preface and Appendix to *Lyrical Ballads, Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, ed. W.J.B. Owen (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 90.

itself: "God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night."[169] For the mature poet of *The Prelude* who acknowledges both the potential and the limitations of words and names, language can be "an incarnation of the thought" and can "uphold, and feed, and leave in quiet like the power of gravitation or the air we breathe . . . . "[170] And so when circumstances provide him with the right subject and inspiration as he describes in Book VIII, the poet need no longer fret about his language choices: "thus flowed my thoughts / In a pure stream of words fresh from the heart."[171]

[169]Genesis 1:5, *King James Study Bible*, King James Version, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988).
[170] "Essay Upon Epitaphs," III, *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism,* ed. W.J.B. Owen (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974) 154.
[171] VIII, 467-68.

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